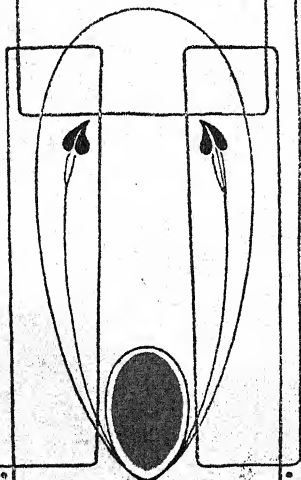


THE RED LETTER
SHAKESPEARE

EDITED BY
E. K. CHAMBERS

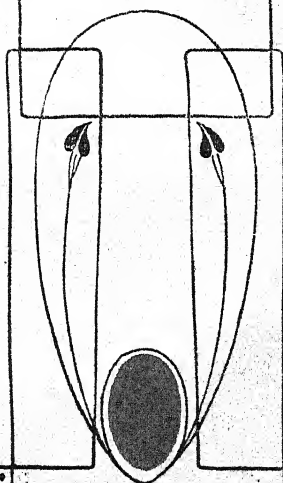


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· CYMBELINE ·



LONDON MCMVII

Introduction



RECOGNITION has long been given to the fact that the three last plays completed by Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, together with *Pericles* for which he can only in part be responsible, form a distinct group by themselves amongst his works, and are marked by certain qualities of temper and outlook upon life which differentiate them rather sharply from their immediate predecessors. It is a far cry indeed from the later tragedies, with their remorseless analysis of human frailties and their sombre interrogation of human destiny, to the serene optimism which slowly directs the travail of a Hermione or an Imogen to its golden close, or to the solemn vindication of an overruling Providence through the symbolism of Prospero's triumphant magic. Hardly less is the gulf between the imperishable phrasing, cast in monumental bronze, of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the facile and disorderly prettinesses, which hang about the relaxed and structureless periods of the later

plays. A recent thesis, supported by a fund of learning and a gift of critical perception that command all respect, endeavours to trace this fundamental change in Shakespeare's dramatic methods to the growing reputation of Beaumont and Fletcher, and to the fresh stimulus afforded to the imagination of the older poet by the need of catching the trick of romantic writing which his younger rivals had brought into vogue. In particular it is suggested that *Cymbeline* owes its inspiration to *Philaster*, the elements of whose plot it reproduces in a new and ingenious combination, while the slandered and disguised Imogen has her double prototype in the slandered Arethusa and the disguised Bellario.

It would be easier to determine the question of priority if there were less uncertainty as to the chronology of the plays produced by the King's men during the first Jacobean decade; in the present state of the evidence upon that subject, it is hardly possible to go beyond guess-work. There is nothing, for example, to show whether, as a matter of fact, *Philaster* preceded or followed *Cymbeline*; and therefore, so far as there is anything in the nature of direct imitation between the two plays, it may have been either on the one side or the other. I am not myself impressed, in actually reading the two plays, by a sense of direct imitation to anything like the extent which a formal comparative analysis of their motives suggests.

Apart from any such issue, it may freely be admitted that the general scope of the later tragicomedies of Shakespeare and that of the early tragicomedies of Beaumont and Fletcher is much the same. They have many devices of construction and many types of character in common. Wickedness triumphs for a time, but never in the end. Truth and chastity pass through the furnace and come out unstained. Any lie, however improbable, finds temporary acceptance. The happiness of lovers is broken by intrigues and misunderstandings, and restored by fortunate discoveries. Heroines conceal themselves in the garb of pages and endure moving adventures by flood and field. Children are lost and found again. Ancient feuds and shattered friendship come to reconciliation in the fullness of time. The woods prove less savage than the court, and the pomp of kings is contrasted to its disadvantage with pastoral content. The tyrannical father, the cruel step-mother, the devoted wife, the credulous lover, the loutish rival, the wanton maid of honour, the faithful servant, all play their parts. The salad is variously compounded and flavoured, but the ingredients are always the same. They belong to the formulæ, not of life, but of romance. The opportunities which they afford for dramatic situations and for sentimental embroidery seem to have made them especially dear to Jacobean audiences. But obviously they are neither the invention

of Shakespeare nor of Beaumont and Fletcher. They had long been common form in the narrative romances both of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance; and many of the earlier dramatists themselves, even if less continuously and with less abundance of rhetoric and pathos, had freely exploited them. So far as Shakespeare is concerned, many of the individual incidents and motives of *Cymbeline* can readily be paralleled from former plays; what is new is the emphasis with which they are selected and arranged.

In adopting tragicomedy as, for him, the final dramatic expression of life, Shakespeare was, in a sense, returning to a way of dramatic writing which he had first experimentally essayed in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*, had then used to provide an emotional background to the comedy of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, had allowed to become conspicuous and questionable in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and had finally rejected with the unsmiling satire of *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. In the storm and stress of the great tragedies there is naturally no room left for the happy ending. The new tragicomedy succeeds in steering clear of certain technical faults upon which the old was apt to be wrecked. So conventional a representation of life can only maintain itself by being consistent. If it is brought into contact with the touchstone of real humanity, it ceases to per-

suade. This is an artistic principle which Shakespeare had not always grasped. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the existence of poor passionate Proteus, with the poet's fragment of self-revelation in him, puts to shame the hollow artifices of the concluding scene. Still more, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, does the melodrama of Claudio and Hero pale into unconvincingness beside the exuberant vitality of Beatrice and her Benedick. There is no such mistake in *Cymbeline*. This is to be a symbolical and idealized rendering of life, and there must be no such clashing of dramatic planes as would result from the intrusion of an actual transcript taken from the book of life itself. Shakespeare works with puppets throughout; and the puppet Imogen, set between the puppet Cloten and the puppet Posthumus, may pass for perfection, so long as the danger of comparison with the flesh and blood of a Cleopatra or even of a Cressida is scrupulously avoided.

The chief difficulty in the theory, which traces the characteristics of Shakespeare's last dramatic manner to the imitation of Beaumont and Fletcher, seems to me to lie in its failure to account for the profound change of spiritual mood which underlies the transition from tragedy to romance. For years the soul of Shakespeare had trodden the abyss of vexed and gloomy speculation. From the questionings of *Macbeth* he had passed to the denials of *King Lear*, and had seen love of woman as the

scourge of the world in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and honour of man as the mask of the egoist in *Coriolanus*. The last echo of the Titanic denunciation is in the half incoherent mutterings of *Timon of Athens*; and then, tentatively at first in *Pericles*, but fully and without hesitation in *Cymbeline*, comes this entirely new utterance, the expression of a mind at peace with itself and ready to accept the ordering of things with the contented optimism of an unembarrassed faith. *Cymbeline* is, as it were, a palinode to *King Lear*. The radiant whiteness of Cordelia, impotent of old to make head against the forces of evil, revisits earth again in Imogen, and broods like a dove over a *denouement* in which unspotted purity and simple honesty come in the ultimate issue, after much vexation, to their own. The unanswered cosmic problems are laid aside, or take on new colours in the light of a regained faith. Life, which the purged eye once scanned with a splendid despair, is now seen only through a golden haze of sentiment. The broken harmonies are resolved before the close. A great and gracious peace descends upon the autumn of thought.

“Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter’s rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta’en thy wages.”

What is remarkable is not, of course, that the tragic mood should come to an end, and the

perturbed spirit find rest at last; but rather that the change should come so suddenly, presenting itself as a breach of continuity instead of as the natural term of a logical process of mental growth. Up to this point Shakespeare's development has been intelligible enough. Play has led on to play by sensible and regular gradations. The blossoming and fruitage of his art, however astonishing, have none the less formed an organic whole. And now the links are broken. Something inexplicable has intervened, and without hint or warning the whole outlook of the poet has changed. He accepts where he denied; blesses where he banned. The universe which but a moment ago he reviewed and judged to be chaos, now spreads itself out before his eyes as the ordered and sunlit garden of God. I hope to give all credit to the critical principle which bids us remember that Shakespeare, in addition to being a great poet, was also an expert and adroit stage-manager. But I do not find it possible to ascribe so fundamental a metamorphosis to a mere desire to rival others in exploiting a dramatic convention which had proved congenial to the easy temper of Anne of Denmark or the chivalrous instincts of the young Prince Henry. Surely to adopt such a theory would be to refuse a spiritual content alike to the tragedies and to the romances; and to see nothing either in *Hamlet* or in *The Tempest* but the product of an inventive brain intent on penny-knaves'

Cymbeline

delight. There must be more in it than this. The profound cleavage in Shakespeare's mental history about 1607-1608 must have been due to some spiritual crisis the nature of which it is only possible dimly to conjecture; some such process as that which in the psychology of religion bears the name of conversion; or perhaps some sickness of the brain which left him an old man, freed at last from the fever of speculation and well disposed to spend the afternoon of life in unexacting and agreeable dreams. This latter hypothesis would help also to explain the marked change of style which accompanied the change of dramatic purpose in the romances. In these complicated and incoherent periods, in these softened and unaccentuated rhythms, in these tender and evanescent beauties, I find less a deliberate attempt to reduce the declamation of the stage to the colloquial dialogue of daily life, than the natural outcome of relaxed mental energies, shrinking from the effort after the wrought and nervous rhythms of the past.

Whatever it was that happened to Shakespeare, one may suspect that it profoundly affected his way of life no less than his way of thought. Characteristic of all the romances is that tendency to the idyll, which it is difficult not to connect with his apparent withdrawal, at an earlier age than one would have looked for, from the town to the country, from London and its stage to Stratford and its

meadows. This element has also been attributed to the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher, and in particular the Welsh scenes in *Cymbeline* have been regarded as an amplification of the fine aspiration after the forest life in the fourth act of *Philaster*—

“Oh, that I had been nourished in these woods
With milk of goats and acorns, and not known
The right of crowns, nor the dissembling trains
Of women’s looks; but digged myself a cave,
Where I, my fire, my cattle, and my bed
Might have been shut together in one shed;
And then had taken me some mountain girl,
Beaten with winds, chaste as the hardened rocks
Whereon she dwelt, that might have strewed my
bed

With leaves and reeds and with the skins of beasts
Our neighbours, and have borne at her big breasts
My large coarse issue. This had been a life
Free from vexation.”

The affinity of this to the exaltation by Be-larius in the third act of *Cymbeline* of his honest freedom in a rocky demesne over the city’s usuries and the art of the court is obvious. But it is to be remembered that, although the technical setting of the pastoral is absent from both passages, the “sweet content” of the country life had formed part of an Elizabethan tradition of pastoral sentiment long before it was handled either by Beaumont and Fletcher or by Shakespeare; and also that there is no especial reason why, as between

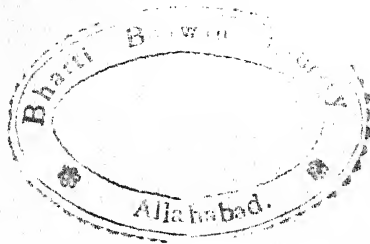
Philaster and *Cymbeline*; the priority should lie with the former rather than with the latter. Indeed, so long as the chronological relations of the two plays are undetermined, the probabilities lie all the other way. Idyll is incidental in *Philaster*; in *Cymbeline* it is an integral part of the design. In the other romances of Beaumont and Fletcher cognate to *Philaster*, with the exception of *The Faithful Shepherdess* which is technically pastoral, idyll is far from being as conspicuous as it is in *The Winter's Tale* or *The Tempest*, in which the upbringing of Perdita among the sheep-folds of Bohemia or of Miranda in her innocent and sequestered isle afford the closest parallels to the upbringing of the flower-like boys, Guiderius and Arviragus.

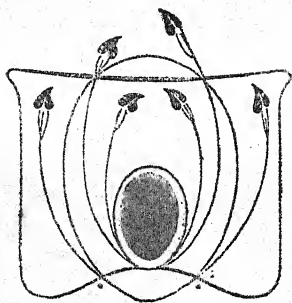
E. K. CHAMBERS.

March, 1907.

Cymbeline was first printed in the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623. It cannot have been produced later than 1611, for Dr. Simon Forman, who died in September of that year, records in his manuscript *Book of Plays and Notes Thereof* that he saw it, and describes the plot. He names no theatre and gives no date, but the three other plays described in the manuscript were seen at the Globe in 1610 and 1611. There is no reason to assume that the play was new when Forman saw it, and it is not possible to fix a definite date before which it cannot have been produced; but it is to be grouped on grounds of subject and style with Shakespeare's latest plays, and can hardly be earlier than 1608-1611. The original actors were doubtless the King's men, at the Globe or the Blackfriars. For the historical or legendary background Shakespeare's source was, as usual, the *Chronicle* of Raphael Holinshed; the main plot, of Iachimo's treachery, is a version of a story dear to mediæval and Renaissance fiction, and to be found in particular in the 9th *Novel* of the 2nd *Day* of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*. Shakespeare probably knew the *Decamerone* and possibly also a version in an English volume of tales called *Westward for Smelt*, of which, however, no edition earlier than 1620 is now extant. The rhymed dream in Act v. Sc. 4 can hardly be from Shakespeare's hand.







DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CYMBELINE, King of Britain.

CLOTEN, Son to the Queen.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, a Gentleman.

BELARIUS, a Lord, disguised as MORGAN.

GUIDERIUS, disguised as

POLYDORE,

ARVIRAGUS, disguised as

CADWAL,

} Sons to Cymbeline.

PHILARIO, Friend to Posthumus.

IACHIMO, Friend to Philario.

A French Gentleman, Friend to Philario.

CAIUS LUCIUS, a Roman General.

A Roman Captain.

Two British Captains.

PISANIO, Servant to Posthumus.

CORNELIUS, a Physician.

PHILARMONUS, a Soothsayer.

Two Lords of Cymbeline's Court.

Two Gentlemen of the same.

Two Gaolers.

QUEEN, Wife to Cymbeline.

IMOGEN, Daughter to Cymbeline and Wife to
Posthumus, afterwards disguised as FIDELE.

HELEN, Lady to Imogen.

&c.

The Tragedy of Cymbeline

ACT I

SCENE I. *Britain. Cymbeline's palace.*

Enter two Gentlemen.

First Gentleman. You do not meet a man but
frowns; our bloods
No more obey the heavens than our courtiers
Still seem as does the king.

Second Gentleman. But what's the matter?

First Gentleman. His daughter, and the heir of
his kingdom, whom
He purposed to his wife's sole son, a widow
That late he married, hath referred herself
Unto a poor but worthy gentleman. She's wedded,
Her husband banished, she imprisoned; all
Is outward sorrow, though I think the king
Be touched at very heart.

Second Gentleman. None but the king? 10

First Gentleman. He that hath lost her too; so is
the queen,
That most desired the match. But not a courtier,
Although they wear their faces to the bent
Of the king's looks, hath a heart that is not
Glad at the thing they scowl at.

Second Gentleman. And why so?

First Gentleman. He that hath missed the princess
is a thing

Too bad for bad report; and he that hath her—
I mean, that married her, alack, good man!
And therefore banished—is a creature such
As, to seek through the regions of the earth 20
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare. I do not think
So fair an outward and such stuff within
Endows a man but he.

Second Gentleman. You speak him far.

First Gentleman. I do extend him, sir, within
himself;
Crush him together, rather than unfold
His measure duly.

Second Gentleman. What's his name and birth?

First Gentleman. I cannot delve him to the root.
His father

Was called Sicilius, who did join his honour
Against the Romans with Cassibulan, 30
But had his titles by Tenantius, whom
He served with glory and admired success;
So gained the sur-addition Leonatus.
And had, besides this gentleman in question,
Two other sons, who in the wars of the time
Died with their swords in hand; for which their
father,

Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow,
That he quit being; and his gentle lady,
Big of this gentleman our theme, deceased
As he was born. The king he takes the babe 40
To his protection; calls him Posthumus Leonatus;
Breeds him, and makes him of his bedchamber;

Puts to him all the learnings that his time
Could make him the receiver of; which he took,
As we do air, fast as 't was ministered;
And in his spring became a harvest; lived in court,
Which rare it is to do, most praised, most loved,
A sample to the youngest, to the more mature
A glass that feated them, and to the graver
A child that guided dotards; to his mistress, 50
For whom he now is banished, her own price
Proclaims how she esteemed him, and his virtue
By her election may be truly read,
What kind of man he is.

Second Gentleman. I honour him
Even out of your report. But, pray you, tell me,
Is she sole child to the king?

First Gentleman. His only child.
He had two sons—if this be worth your hearing,
Mark it—the eldest of them at three years old,
In the swathing-clothes the other, from their
nursery
Were stolen; and to this hour no guess in know-
ledge 60
Which way they went.

Second Gentleman. How long is this ago?

First Gentleman. Some twenty years.

Second Gentleman. That a king's children should
be so conveyed,
So slackly guarded, and the search so slow,
That could not trace them!

First Gentleman. Howsoe'er 't is strange,
Or that the negligence may well be laughed at,
Yet is it true, sir.

Second Gentleman. I do well believe you.

First Gentleman. We must forbear. Here comes
the gentleman,
The queen, and princess. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the Queen, POSTHUMUS, and IMOGEN.

Queen. No, be assured you shall not find me,
daughter, 70

After the slander of most stepmothers,
Evil-eyed unto you. You are my prisoner, but
Your gaoler shall deliver you the keys
That lock up your restraint.—For you, Posthumus,
So soon as I can win the offended king,
I will be known your advocate. Marry, yet
The fire of rage is in him; and 't were good
You leaned unto his sentence with what patience
Your wisdom may inform you.

Posthumus. Please your highness,
I will from hence to-day.

Queen. You know the peril. 80
I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying
The pangs of barred affections, though the king
Hath charged you should not speak together. [*Exit.*

Imogen. O

Dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant
Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,
I something fear my father's wrath, but nothing—
Always reserved my holy duty—what
His rage can do on me. You must be gone;
And I shall here abide the hourly shot
Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,
But that there is this jewel in the world,
That I may see again. 90

Posthumus. My queen! my mistress!
O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause
To be suspected of more tenderness
Than doth become a man! I will remain
The loyalest husband that did e'er plight troth.
My residence in Rome at one Philario's,
Who to my father was a friend, to me
Known but by letter; thither write, my queen,
And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send, 100
Though ink be made of gall.

Re-enter Queen.

Queen. Be brief, I pray you!
If the king come, I shall incur I know not
How much of his displeasure.—[*Aside.*] Yet I'll
move him

To walk this way. I never do him wrong,
But he does buy my injuries, to be friends;
Pays dear for my offences. [*Exit.*]

Posthumus. Should we be taking leave
As long a term as yet we have to live,
The lothness to depart would grow. Adieu!

Imogen. Nay, stay a little!
Were you but riding forth to air yourself, 110
Such parting were too petty. Look here, love!
This diamond was my mother's. Take it, heart!
But keep it till you woo another wife,
When Imogen is dead.

Posthumus. How, how? another?
You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
And sear up my embracements from a next
With bonds of death!—Remain, remain thou here,
[*Putting on the ring.*]

While sense can keep it on! And, sweetest, fairest,
 As I my poor self did exchange for you,
 To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles
 I still win of you; for my sake wear this.
 It is a manacle of love; I'll place it
 Upon this fairest prisoner.

120

[Putting a bracelet upon her arm.]

Imogen.
 When shall we see again?

O the gods!

Posthumus.

Alack, the king!

Enter CYMBELINE and Lords.

Cymbeline. Thou basest thing, avoid hence from
 my sight!
 If after this command thou fraught the court
 With thy unworthiness, thou diest. Away!
 Thou art poison to my blood.

Posthumus. The gods protect you,
 And bless the good remainders of the court!
 I am gone.

[Exit.]

Imogen. There cannot be a pinch in death
 More sharp than this is.

130

Cymbeline. O disloyal thing,
 That shouldst repair my youth, thou heapest
 A year's age on me!

Imogen. I beseech you, sir,
 Harm not yourself with your vexation.
 I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare
 Subdues all pangs, all fears.

Cymbeline. Past grace, obedience?

Imogen. Past hope, and in despair; that way, past
 grace.

Cymbeline. That mightst have had the sole son
of my queen!

Imogen. O blessed, that I might not! I chose an
eagle,

And did avoid a puttock.

140

Cymbeline. Thou tookest a beggar; wouldst have
made my throne

A seat for baseness.

Imogen. No! I rather added

A lustre to it.

Cymbeline. O thou vild one!

Imogen. Sir,

It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus.

You bred him as my playfellow, and he is

A man worth any woman; overbuys me

Almost the sum he pays.

Cymbeline. What, art thou mad!

Imogen. Almost, sir. Heaven restore me! Would
I were

A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus

Our neighbour shepherd's son!

Cymbeline. Thou foolish thing! 150

Re-enter Queen.

—They were again together; you have done

Not after our command. Away with her,

And pen her up!

Queen. Beseech your patience!—Peace,

Dear lady daughter, peace!—Sweet sovereign,

140. puttock, kite.

143. vild, vile.

149. neat-herd, cattle-herd.

Leave us to ourselves, and make yourself some
comfort

Out of your best advice.

Cymbeline. Nay, let her languish
A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,
Die of this folly! [*Exeunt Cymbeline and Lords.*]

Queen. Fie! you must give way.

Enter PISANIO.

Here is your servant.—How now, sir! What news?

Pisanio. My lord your son drew on my master.

Queen.

Ha! 160

No harm, I trust, is done?

Pisanio. There might have been,
But that my master rather played than fought,
And had no help of anger. They were parted
By gentlemen at hand.

Queen.

I am very glad on it.

Imogen. Your son's my father's friend; he takes
his part,

To draw upon an exile—O brave sir!—
I would they were in Afric both together,
Myself by with a needle, that I might prick
The goer-back.—Why came you from your master?

Pisanio. On his command; he would not suffer
me

170

To bring him to the haven; left these notes
Of what commands I should be subject to,
When it pleased you to employ me.

Queen.

This hath been
Your faithful servant; I dare lay mine honour
He will remain so.

Pisanio.

I humbly thank your highness.

Queen. Pray, walk awhile!

Imogen. [To *Pisano*.] About some half-hour hence,
I pray you, speak with me. You shall at least
Go see my lord aboard. For this time leave me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The same.*

Enter CLOTEN *and two Lords.*

First Lord. Sir, I would advise you to shift a shirt; the violence of action hath made you reek as a sacrifice. Where air comes out, air comes in; there's none abroad so wholesome as that you vent.

Cloten. If my shirt were bloody, then to shift it.
—Have I hurt him?

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] No, faith; not so much as his patience.

First Lord. Hurt him! his body's a passable carcass, if he be not hurt; it is a throughfare for steel, if it be not hurt.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] His steel was in debt; it went o' th' backside the town.

Cloten. The villain would not stand me.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] No; but he fled forward still, toward your face.

First Lord. Stand you! You have land enough of your own; but he added to your having, gave you some ground.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] As many inches as you²⁰ have oceans. Puppies!

Cloten. I would they had not come between us.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] So would I, till you had

9. *passable*, able to be passed through.

measured how long a fool you were upon the ground.

Cloten. And that she should love this fellow, and refuse me!

Second Lord. [Aside.] If it be a sin to make a true election, she is damned.

First Lord. Sir, as I told you always, her beauty³⁰ and her brain go not together. She's a good sign, but I have seen small reflection of her wit.

Second Lord. [Aside.] She shines not upon fools, lest the reflection should hurt her.

Cloten. Come, I'll to my chamber. Would there had been some hurt done!

Second Lord. [Aside.] I wish not so, unless it had been the fall of an ass, which is no great hurt.

Cloten. You'll go with us?

First Lord. I'll attend your lordship.

40

Cloten. Nay, come, let's go together.

Second Lord. Well, my lord. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III. *The same.*

Enter IMOGEN and PISANIO.

Imogen. I would thou grewest unto the shores of the haven,
And question'dst every sail. If he should write,
And I not have it, 't were a paper lost,
As offered mercy is. What was the last
That he spake to thee?

Pisanio. It was, his queen, his queen.

Imogen. Then waved his handkerchief?

Pisanio. And kissed it, madam.

Imogen. Senseless linen! happier therein than I!
And that was all?

Pisanio. No, madam; for so long
As he could make me with this eye or ear
Distinguish him from others, he did keep 10
The deck, with glove or hat or handkerchief
Still waving, as the fits and stirs of his mind
Could best express how slow his soul sailed on,
How swift his ship.

Imogen. Thou shouldst have made him
As little as a crow, or less, ere left
To after-eye him.

Pisanio. Madam, so I did.

Imogen. I would have broke mine eye-strings;
cracked them, but
To look upon him, till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
Nay, followed him, till he had melted from 20
The smallness of a gnat to air, and then
Have turned mine eye, and wept. But, good

Pisanio,
When shall we hear from him?

Pisanio. Be assured, madam,
With his next vantage.

Imogen. I did not take my leave of him, but had
Most pretty things to say. Ere I could tell him
How I would think on him, at certain hours,
Such thoughts and such; or I could make him
swear
The shes of Italy should not betray
Mine interest and his honour; or have charged him, 30
At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,

To encounter me with orisons, for then
 I am in heaven for him; or ere I could
 Give him that parting kiss which I had set
 Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father,
 And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
 Shakes all our buds from growing.

Enter a Lady.

Lady. The queen, madam,
 Desires your highness' company.

Imogen. Those things I bid you do, get them
 dispatched.
 I will attend the queen.

Pisanio. Madam, I shall. [*Exeunt.* 40

SCENE IV. *Rome. Philario's house.*

*Enter PHILARIO, IACHIMO, a Frenchman, a
 Dutchman, and a Spaniard.*

Iachimo. Believe it, sir, I have seen him in
 Britain. He was then of a crescent note, expected
 to prove so worthy as since he hath been allowed
 the name of. But I could then have looked on
 him without the help of admiration, though the
 catalogue of his endowments had been tabled by
 his side, and I to peruse him by items.

Philario. You speak of him when he was less
 furnished than now he is with that which makes
 him both without and within. 10

Frenchman. I have seen him in France. We
 had very many there could behold the sun with
 as firm eyes as he.

32. *orisons*, prayers.

2. *crescent*, increasing. 2. *note*, reputation.

Iachimo. This matter of marrying, his king's daughter, wherein he must be weighed rather by her value than his own, words him, I doubt not, a great deal from the matter.

Frenchman. And then his banishment!

Iachimo. Ay, and the approbation of those that weep this lamentable divorce, under her colours, 20 are wonderfully to extend him, be it but to fortify her judgement, which else an easy battery might lay flat, for taking a beggar without less quality. But how comes it he is to sojourn with you? How creeps acquaintance?

Philario. His father and I were soldiers together, to whom I have been often bound for no less than my life.—Here comes the Briton! Let him be so entertained amongst you, as suits with gentlemen of your knowing, to a stranger of his quality. 30

Enter POSTHUMUS.

—I beseech you all, be better known to this gentleman, whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine. How worthy he is I will leave to appear hereafter, rather than story him in his own hearing.

Frenchman. Sir, we have known together in Orleans.

Posthumus. Since when I have been debtor to you for courtesies, which I will be ever to pay, and yet pay still.

Frenchman. Sir, you o'er-rate my poor kindness. 40 I was glad I did atone my countryman and you; it had been pity you should have been put together

with so mortal a purpose as then each bore, upon importance of so slight and trivial a nature.

Posthumus. By your pardon, sir, I was then a young traveller; rather shunned to go even with what I heard than in my every action to be guided by others' experiences. But, upon my mended judgement—if I offend not to say it is mended—my quarrel was not altogether slight.

50

Frenchman. Faith, yes, to be put to the arbitrement of swords; and by such two that would by all likelihood have confounded one the other, or have fallen both.

Iachimo. Can we, with manners, ask what was the difference?

Frenchman. Safely, I think; 't was a contention in public, which may, without contradiction, suffer the report. It was much like an argument that fell out last night, where each of us fell in praise of 60 our country mistresses; this gentleman at that time vouching—and upon warrant of bloody affirmation—his to be more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified, and less attemptible, than any the rarest of our ladies in France.

Iachimo. That lady is not now living; or this gentleman's opinion, by this, worn out.

Posthumus. She holds her virtue still, and I my mind.

Iachimo. You must not so far prefer her 'fore 70 ours of Italy.

Posthumus. Being so far provoked as I was in France, I would abate her nothing, though I profess myself her adorer, not her friend.

Iachimo. As fair and as good—a kind of hand-in-hand comparison—had been something too fair and too good for any lady in Britain. If she went before others I have seen, as that diamond of yours outlustres many I have beheld, I could not but believe she excelled many. But I have not seen so the most precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.

Posthumus. I praised her as I rated her; so do I my stone.

Iachimo. What do you esteem it at?

Posthumus. More than the world enjoys.

Iachimo. Either your unparagoned mistress is dead, or she's outprized by a trifle.

Posthumus. You are mistaken. The one may be sold, or given, if there were wealth enough for the purchase, or merit for the gift; the other is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods.

Iachimo. Which the gods have given you?

Posthumus. Which, by their graces, I will keep.

Iachimo. You may wear her in title yours; but, you know, strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds. Your ring may be stolen too; so your brace of unprizable estimations, the one is but frail, and the other casual. A cunning thief, or a that way accomplished courtier, would hazard the winning both of first and last.

Posthumus. Your Italy contains none so accomplished a courtier to convince the honour of my mistress, if, in the holding or loss of that, you term

her frail. I do nothing doubt you have store of thieves; notwithstanding, I fear not my ring.

Philario. Let us leave here, gentlemen.

Posthumus. Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signior, I thank him, makes no stranger of me; we are familiar at first.

110

Iachimo. With five times so much conversation, I should get ground of your fair mistress; make her go back, even to the yielding, had I admittance, and opportunity to friend.

Posthumus. No, no.

Iachimo. I dare thereupon pawn the moiety of my estate to your ring; which, in my opinion, o'er-values it something. But I make my wager rather against your confidence than her reputation; and, to bar your offence herein too, I durst attempt it 120 against any lady in the world.

Posthumus. You are a great deal abused in too bold a persuasion; and I doubt not you sustain what you are worthy of by your attempt.

Iachimo. What's that?

Posthumus. A repulse; though your attempt, as you call it, deserve more, a punishment too.

Philario. Gentlemen, enough of this! it came in too suddenly; let it die as it was born, and, I pray you, be better acquainted.

130

Iachimo. Would I had put my estate and my neighbour's on th' approbation of what I have spoke!

Posthumus. What lady would you choose to assail?

116. *moiety*, half.122. *abused*, mistaken.132. *approbation*, trial.

Iachimo. Yours; whom in constancy you think stands so safe. I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring, that, commend me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will 140 bring from thence that honour of hers which you imagine so reserved.

Posthumus. I will wage against your gold, gold to it. My ring I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it.

Iachimo. You are afraid, and therein the wiser. If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting. But I see you have some religion in you, that you fear.

Posthumus. This is but a custom in your tongue; 150 you bear a graver purpose, I hope.

Iachimo. I am the master of my speeches, and would undergo what's spoken, I swear.

Posthumus. Will you? I shall but lend my diamond till your return. Let there be covenants drawn between's. My mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking. I dare you to this match; here's my ring.

Philario. I will have it no lay.

Iachimo. By the gods, it is one.—If I bring you 160 no sufficient testimony that I have enjoyed the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats are yours; so is your diamond too. If I come off, and leave her in such honour as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and

137. ducats, crowns.

149. religion, scruple.

143. wage, stake.

159. lay, wager.

my gold are yours; provided I have your commendation for my more free entertainment.

Posthumus. I embrace these conditions; let us have articles betwixt us. Only, thus far you shall answer. If you make your voyage upon her, and 170 give me directly to understand you have prevailed, I am no further your enemy; she is not worth our debate. If she remain unseduced, you not making it appear otherwise, for your ill opinion, and the assault you have made to her chastity, you shall answer me with your sword.

Iachimo Your hand! a covenant! We will have these things set down by lawful counsel, and straight away for Britain, lest the bargain should catch cold and starve. I will fetch my gold, and have our two 180 wagers recorded.

Posthumus. Agreed!

[*Exeunt Posthumus and Iachimo.*]

Frenchman. Will this hold, think you?

Philario. Signior Iachimo will not from it. Pray, let us follow 'em. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *Britain. A room in Cymbeline's palace.*

Enter Queen, Ladies, and CORNELIUS.

Queen. Whiles yet the dew's on ground, gather those flowers!

Make haste! who has the note of them?

First Lady. I, madam.

Queen. Dispatch! [*Exeunt Ladies.*]

—Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?

Cornelius. Pleaseth your highness, ay! here they are, madam.

But I beseech your grace, without offence—
My conscience bids me ask—wherefore you have
Commanded of me these most poisonous com-
pounds,

Which are the movers of a languishing death;
But, though slow, deadly?

Queen.

I wonder, doctor, 10
Thou askest me such a question. Have I not been
Thy pupil long? Hast thou not learned me how
To make perfumes, distil, preserve, yea, so
That our great king himself doth woo me oft
For my confections? Having thus far proceeded—
Unless thou thinkest me devilish—is it not meet
That I did amplify my judgement in
Other conclusions? I will try the forces
Of these thy compounds on such creatures as
We count not worth the hanging, but none human, 20
To try the vigour of them, and apply
Allayments to their act, and by them gather
Their several virtues and effects.

Cornelius.

Your highness
Shall from this practice but make hard your heart.
Besides, the seeing these effects will be
Both noisome and infectious.

Queen.

O, content thee!
—[*Aside.*] Here comes a flattering rascal; upon
him
Will I first work; he's for his master,
And enemy to my son.

Enter PISANIO.

—How now, Pisanio!

—Doctor, your service for this time is ended; 30
Take your own way!

Cornelius. [Aside.] I do suspect you, madam;
But you shall do no harm.

Queen. [To Pisanio.] Hark thee, a word!

Cornelius. [Aside.] I do not like her. She doth
think she has

Strange lingering poisons. I do know her spirit,
And will not trust one of her malice with
A drug of such damned nature. Those she has
Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile,
Which first, perchance, she'll prove on cats and
dogs,

Then afterward up higher; but there is 40
No danger in what show of death it makes,
More than the locking-up the spirits a time,
To be more fresh, reviving. She is fooled
With a most false effect; and I the truer,
So to be false with her.

Queen. No further service, doctor,
Until I send for thee.

Cornelius. I humbly take my leave. *[Exit.]*

Queen. Weeps she still, sayest thou? Dost thou
think in time

She will not quench, and let instructions enter
Where folly now possesses? Do thou work!
When thou shalt bring me word she loves my son,
I'll tell thee on the instant thou art then 50
As great as is thy master—greater, for
His fortunes all lie speechless, and his name
Is at last gasp. Return he cannot, nor

Continue where he is. To shift his being
Is to exchange one misery with another;
And every day that comes comes to decay
A day's work in him. What shalt thou expect,
To be depender on a thing that leans,
Who cannot be new built, nor has no friends,

[*The Queen drops a box; Pisanio takes it up.*]

So much as but to prop him?—Thou takest up 60
Thou knowest not what; but take it for thy
labour!

It is a thing I made, which hath the king
Five times redeemed from death. I do not know
What is more cordial. Nay, I prithee, take it!
It is an earnest of a farther good
That I mean to thee. Tell thy mistress how
The case stands with her; do it as from thyself.
Think what a chance thou changest on; but think
Thou hast thy mistress still, to boot my son,
Who shall take notice of thee. I'll move the king 70
To any shape of thy preferment, such
As thou'lt desire; and then myself, I chiefly,
That set thee on to this desert, am bound
To load thy merit richly. Call my women!
Think on my words! [Exit Pisanio.]

A sly and constant knave,
Not to be shaken, the agent for his master,
And the remembrancer of her to hold
The hand-fast to her lord. I have given him that,
Which, if he take, shall quite unpeople her
Of liegers for her sweet; and which she after, 80
Except she bend her humour, shall be assured
To taste of too.

78. *hand-fast*, marriage vow.

80. *liegers*, ambassadors.

Re-enter PISANIO and Ladies.

So, so! Well done, well done!
The violets, cowslips, and the primroses,
Bear to my closet.—Fare thee well, Pisanio!
Think on my words! [*Exeunt Queen and Ladies.*

Pisanio. And shall do.
But when to my good lord I prove untrue,
I'll choke myself; there's all I'll do for you. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI. *The same.*

Enter IMOGEN alone.

Imogen. A father cruel, and a step-dame false!
A foolish suitor to a wedded lady,
That hath her husband banished!—O, that husband,
My supreme crown of grief, and those repeated
Vexations of it! Had I been thief-stolen,
As my two brothers, happy! but most miserable
Is the desire that's glorious. Bless'd be those,
How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,
Which seasons comfort.—Who may this be? Fie!

Enter PISANIO and IACHIMO.

Pisanio. Madam, a noble gentleman of Rome 10
Comes from my lord with letters.

Iachimo. Change you, madam?
The worthy Leonatus is in safety,
And greets your highness dearly. [*Presents a letter.*

Imogen. Thanks, good sir!
You're kindly welcome.

Iachimo. [*Aside.*] All of her that is out of door
most rich!
If she be furnished with a mind so rare,

She is alone the Arabian bird; and I
Have lost the wager. Boldness be my friend!
Arm me, audacity, from head to foot!
Or, like the Parthian, I shall flying fight;
Rather, directly fly.

20

Imogen. [*Reads.*] 'He is one of the noblest note, to
whose kindnesses I am most infinitely tied. Reflect
upon him accordingly, as you value your trust.

LEONATUS.'

So far I read aloud;
But even the very middle of my heart
Is warmed by the rest, and take it thankfully.
You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I
Have words to bid you, and shall find it so,
In all that I can do.

30

Iachimo. Thanks, fairest lady!
What, are men mad? Hath nature given them
eyes

To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop
Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt
The fiery orbs above, and the twinned stones
Upon the numbered beach, and can we not
Partition make with spectacles so precious
'Twixt fair and foul?

Imogen. What makes your admiration?

Iachimo. It cannot be in the eye, for apes and
monkeys,
'T'wixt two such shes, would chatter this way, and
Contemn with mows the other; nor in the judge-
ment,
For idiots, in this case of favour, would

40

17. *the Arabian bird*, the phoenix.37. *spectacles*; organs of vision. 41. *mows*, grimaces.

Be wisely definite; nor in the appetite.
Sluttery, to such neat excellence opposed,
Should make desire vomit emptiness,
Not so allured to feed.

Imogen. What is the matter, trow?

Iachimo. The cloy'd will,
That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub
Both filled and running, ravening first the lamb,
Longs after for the garbage.

Imogen. What, dear sir, 50
Thus raps you? Are you well?

Iachimo. Thanks, madam! well.—[*To Pisanio.*]
Beseech you, sir, desire
My man's abode where I did leave him; he
Is strange and peevish.

Pisanio. I was going, sir,
To give him welcome. [*Exit.*]

Imogen. Continues well my lord? His health,
beseech you?

Iachimo. Well, madam!

Imogen. Is he disposed to mirth? I hope he is.

Iachimo. Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger
there

So merry and so gamesome. He is called 60
The Briton reveller.

Imogen. When he was here
He did incline to sadness, and oft-times
Not knowing why.

Iachimo. I never saw him sad.
There is a Frenchman his companion, one
An eminent monsieur, that, it seems, much loves

A Gallian girl at home. He furnaces
The thick sighs from him, whiles the jolly Briton—
Your lord, I mean—laughs from his free lungs;
cries ‘O,

Can my sides hold, to think that man who knows
By history, report, or his own proof, 70
What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose
But must be, will his free hours languish for
Assured bondage?’

Imogen. Will my lord say so?

Iachimo. Ay, madam! with his eyes in flood with
laughter.

It is a recreation to be by,
And hear him mock the Frenchman. But heavens
know,
Some men are much to blame.

Imogen. Not he, I hope.

Iachimo. Not he! but yet heaven’s bounty to-
wards him might
Be used more thankfully. In himself, ’t is much;
In you, which I account his beyond all talents, 80
Whilst I am bound to wonder, I am bound
To pity too.

Imogen. What do you pity, sir?

Iachimo. Two creatures heartily.

Imogen. I am one, sir?

You look on me; what wrack discern you in me
Deserves your pity?

Iachimo. Lamentable! What,
To hide me from the radiant sun, and solace
In the dungeon by a snuff?

Imogen. I pray you, sir,
Deliver with more openness your answers
To my demands. Why do you pity me?

Iachimo. That others do—
I was about to say—enjoy your—but
It is an office of the gods to venge it,
Not mine to speak on it.

90

Imogen. You do seem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me. Pray
you—

Since doubting things go ill often hurts more
Than to be sure they do, for certainties
Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,
The remedy then born—discover to me
What both you spur and stop.

Iachimo. Had I this cheek
To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch, 100
Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul
To the oath of loyalty; this object, which
Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye,
Fixing it only here—should I, damned then,
Slaver with lips as common as the stairs
That mount the Capitol; join gripes with hands
Made hard with hourly falsehood—falsehood, as
With labour—then by-peeping in an eye
Base and unlustrous as the smoky light
That's fed with stinking tallow—it were fit 110
That all the plagues of hell should at one time
Encounter such revolt.

Imogen. My lord, I fear,
Has forgot Britain.

Iachimo. And himself. Not I,

Inclined to this intelligence, pronounce
The beggary of his change; but 't is your graces
That from my mutest conscience to my tongue
Charms this report out.

Imogen. Let me hear no more.

Iachimo. O dearest soul, your cause doth strike
my heart

With pity, that doth make me sick. A lady
So fair, and fastened to an empery 120
Would make the greatest king double, to be
partnered

With tomboys, hired with that self exhibition
Which your own coffers yield, with diseased
ventures

That play with all infirmities for gold
Which rottenness can lend nature, such boiled
stuff

As well might poison poison! Be revenged!
Or she that bore you was no queen, and you
Recoil from your great stock.

Imogen. Revenged!

How should I be revenged? If this be true,
As I have such a heart that both mine ears 130
Must not in haste abuse—if it be true,
How should I be revenged?

Iachimo. Should he make me

Live, like Diana's priest, betwixt cold sheets,
Whiles he is vaulting variable ramps,
In your despite, upon your purse? Revenge it!
I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure,
More noble than that runagate to your bed;

120. *emperry*, empire.

122. *exhibition*, maintenance fund.

122. *self*, same.

134. *ramps*, leaps.

And will continue fast to your affection,
Still close as sure.

Imogen. What, ho, Pisanio!

Iachimo. Let me my service tender on your lips. 140

Imogen. Away! I do condemn mine ears that
have

So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,
Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not
For such an end thou seekest, as base as strange.
Thou wrongest a gentleman who is as far
From thy report as thou from honour; and
Solicitest here a lady that disdains
Thee and the devil alike.—What ho, Pisanio!—
The king my father shall be made acquainted
Of thy assault. If he shall think it fit, 150
A saucy stranger in his court to mart
As in a Romish stew, and to expound
His beastly mind to us, he hath a court
He little cares for, and a daughter who
He not respects at all.—What, ho, Pisanio!—

Iachimo. O happy Leonatus! I may say,
The credit that thy lady hath of thee
Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness
Her assured credit.—Bless'd live you long,
A lady to the worthiest sir that ever 160
Country called his, and you his mistress, only
For the most worthiest fit! Give me your pardon!
I have spoke this, to know if your affiance
Were deeply rooted, and shall make your lord,
That which he is, new o'er; and he is one
The truest mannered, such a holy witch,

139. *close*, secret.

152. *stew*, brothel.

151. *mart*, bargain.

163. *affiance*, faith.

That he enchants societies into him.
Half all men's hearts are his.

Imogen.

You make amends.

Iachimo. He sits 'mongst men like a descended
god.

He hath a kind of honour sets him off, 170
More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,
Most mighty princess, that I have adventured
To try your taking of a false report, which hath
Honoured with confirmation your great judgement
In the election of a sir so rare,
Which you know cannot err. The love I bear
him

Made me to fan you thus; but the gods made you,
Unlike all others, chaffless. Pray, your pardon!

Imogen. All's well, sir; take my power in the
court for yours.

Iachimo. My humble thanks! I had almost forgot 180
To entreat your grace but in a small request,
And yet of moment too, for it concerns
Your lord. Myself, and other noble friends,
Are partners in the business.

Imogen.

Pray, what is it?

Iachimo. Some dozen Romans of us, and your
lord,

The best feather of our wing, have mingled sums
To buy a present for the emperor;
Which I, the factor for the rest, have done
In France. 'T is plate of rare device, and jewels
Of rich and exquisite form, their values great; 190
And I am something curious, being strange,

177. *fan*, winnow.

191. *curious*, anxious.

To have them in safe stowage. May it please you
To take them in protection?

Imogen. Willingly;
And pawn mine honour for their safety. Since
My lord hath interest in them, I will keep them
In my bedchamber.

Iachimo. They are in a trunk,
Attended by my men. I will make bold
To send them to you, only for this night;
I must aboard to-morrow.

Imogen. O, no, no!

Iachimo. Yes, I beseech; or I shall short my
word 200
By lengthening my return. From Gallia
I crossed the seas on purpose and on promise
To see your grace.

Imogen. I thank you for your pains.
But not away to-morrow!

Iachimo. O, I must, madam.
Therefore I shall beseech you, if you please
To greet your lord with writing, do it to-night.
I have outstood my time, which is material
To the tender of our present.

Imogen. I will write.
Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept,
And truly yielded you. You're very welcome. 210

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

SCENE I. *Britain. Before Cymbeline's palace.**Enter CLOTEN and two Lords.*

Cloten. Was there ever man had such luck! When I kissed the jack upon an up-cast, to be hit away! I had a hundred pound on't; and then a whoreson jackanapes must take me up for swearing, as if I borrowed mine oaths of him, and might not spend them at my pleasure.

First Lord. What got he by that? You have broke his pate with your bowl.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] If his wit had been like him that broke it, it would have run all out. 10

Cloten. When a gentleman is disposed to swear, it is not for any standers-by to curtall his oaths, ha?

Second Lord. No, my lord; [*Aside*] nor crop the ears of them.

Cloten. Whoreson dog! I give him satisfaction? Would he had been one of my rank!

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] To have smelled like a fool.

Cloten. I am not vexed more at any thing in th' earth; a pox on't! I had rather not be so noble as I am. They dare not fight with me, because of 20 the queen my mother. Every Jack-slave hath his belly full of fighting, and I must go up and down like a cock that nobody can match.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] You are cock and capon too; and you crow, cock, with your comb on.

2. *jack*, a ball used as the mark in bowls.

4. *take up*, reprove.

12. *curtall*, curtail, cut short.

Cloten. Sayest thou?

Second Lord. It is not fit your lordship should undertake every companion that you give offence to.

Cloten. No, I know that; but it is fit I should go commit offence to my inferiors.

Second Lord. Ay, it is fit for your lordship only.

Cloten. Why, so I say.

First Lord. Did you hear of a stranger that's come to court to-night?

Cloten. A stranger, and I not know on't!

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] He's a strange fellow himself, and knows it not.

First Lord. There's an Italian come; and, 't is thought, one of Leonatus' friends. 40

Cloten. Leonatus! a banished rascal; and he's another, whatsoever he be. Who told you of this stranger?

First Lord. One of your lordship's pages.

Cloten. Is it fit I went to look upon him? is there no derogation in 't?

Second Lord. You cannot derogate, my lord.

Cloten. Not easily, I think.

Second Lord. [*Aside.*] You are a fool granted; therefore your issues, being foolish, do not dero- 50 gate.

Cloten. Come, I'll go see this Italian. What I have lost to-day at bowls I'll win to-night of him. Come, go!

Second Lord. I'll attend your lordship.

[*Exit Cloten.*]

That such a crafty devil as is his mother
Should yield the world this ass! A woman that
Bears all down with her brain! and this her son
Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,
And leave eighteen. Alas, poor princess, 60
Thou divine Imogen, what thou endurest,
Betwixt a father by thy step-dame governed,
A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer
More hateful than the foul expulsion is
Of thy dear husband! Then that horrid act
Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm
The walls of thy dear honour! Keep unshaked
That temple, thy fair mind, that thou mayst stand,
To enjoy thy banished lord and this great land!
[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *The same. Imogen's bedchamber.*

Enter IMOGEN in her bed and a Lady.

Imogen. Who's there? my woman? Helen?

Lady. Please you, madam.

Imogen. What hour is it?

Lady. Almost midnight, madam.

Imogen. I have read three hours, then; mine eyes
are weak.

Fold down the leaf where I have left; to bed!
Take not away the taper, leave it burning;
And if thou canst awake by four of the clock,
I prithee, call me. Sleep hath seized me wholly.

[Exit Lady.]

To your protection I commend me, gods!
From fairies, and the tempters of the night,
Guard me, beseech ye!

10

[Sleeps. *Iachimo comes from the trunk.*

Iachimo. The crickets sing, and man's o'er-
laboured sense

Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus
Did softly press the rushes, ere he wakened
The chastity he wounded.—Cytherea,
How bravely thou becomest thy bed, fresh lily,
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss!—Rubies unparagoned,
How dearly they do it! 'T is her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame of the taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids, 20
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows, white and azure, laced
With blue of heaven's own tinct.—But my design!
To note the chamber, I will write all down;
Such and such pictures; there the window; such
The adornment of her bed; the arras, figures,
Why, such and such; and the contents of the story.
Ah, but some natural notes about her body
Above ten thousand meaner moveables
Would testify, to enrich mine inventory. 30
O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her,
And be her sense but as a monument,
Thus in a chapel lying!—Come off, come off!

[*Taking off her bracelet.*]

As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard!
'T is mine; and this will witness outwardly,
As strongly as the conscience does within,
To the madding of her lord. On her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
In the bottom of a cowslip! Here's a voucher,

14. *Cytherea*, Venus.

23. *tinct*, hue.

26. *arras*, tapestry, from Arras in Flanders.

38. *cinque-spotted*, five-spotted.

Stronger than ever law could make; this secret 40
Will force him think I have picked the lock, and
ta'en

The treasure of her honour. No more! To what
end?

Why should I write this down, that's riveted,
Screwed to my memory? She hath been reading late
The tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turned down
Where Philomel gave up. I have enough.

To the trunk again, and shut the spring of it!
Swift, swift, you dragons of the night, that dawning
May bare the raven's eye! I lodge in fear;
Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here. 50

[*Clock strikes.*

One, two, three! Time, time! [*Goes into the trunk.*

SCENE III. *The same. An ante-chamber.*

Enter CLOTEN and Lords.

First Lord. Your lordship is the most patient
man in loss, the most coldest that ever turned up
ace.

Cloten. It would make any man cold to lose.

First Lord. But not every man patient after the
noble temper of your lordship. You are most hot
and furious when you win.

Cloten. Winning will put any man into courage.
If I could get this foolish Imogen, I should have
gold enough. It's almost morning, is't not? 10

First Lord. Day, my lord.

Cloten. I would this music would come. I am
advised to give her music a' mornings; they say it
will penetrate.

Enter Musicians.

—Come on; tune! If you can penetrate her with your fingering, so. We'll try with tongue too. If none will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er. First, a very excellent good-conceited thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it; and then let her consider. 20

SONG.

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
 And Phœbus gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chaliced flowers that lies;
 And winking Mary-buds begin
 To ope their golden eyes,
 With every thing that pretty is.
 My lady sweet, arise!
 Arise, arise!

Cloten. So, get you gone! If this penetrate, I 30
 will consider your music the better; if it do not, it
 is a vice in her ears, which horse-hairs and calves'-
 guts, nor the voice of unpaved eunuch to boot, can
 never amend. [*Exeunt Musicians.*]

Second Lord. Here comes the king.

Cloten. I am glad I was up so late, for that's the
 reason I was up so early. He cannot choose but
 take this service I have done fatherly.

Enter CYMBELINE and Queen.

Good morrow to your majesty and to my gracious
 mother!

18. *conceited*, imagined.

25. *Mary-buds*, marigolds.

24. *chaliced*, cup-shaped.

33. *to boot*, in addition.

Cymbeline. Attend you here the door of our stern daughter?
40

Will she not forth?

Cloten. I have assailed her with musics, but she vouchsafes no notice.

Cymbeline. The exile of her minion is too new;
She hath not yet forgot him; some more time
Must wear the print of his remembrance out,
And then she's yours.

Queen. You are most bound to the king,
Who lets go by no vantages that may
Prefer you to his daughter. Frame yourself
To orderly solicits, and be friended 50
With aptness of the season; make denials
Increase your services; so seem as if
You were inspired to do those duties which
You tender to her, that you in all obey her,
Save when command to your dismission tends,
And therein you are senseless.

Cloten.

Senseless! not so.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. So like you, sir, ambassadors from Rome!

The one is Caius Lucius.

Cymbeline. A worthy fellow,
Albeit he comes on angry purpose now;
But that's no fault of his. We must receive him 60
According to the honour of his sender;
And towards himself, his goodness forespent on us,
We must extend our notice.—Our dear son,

44. *minion*, darling (Fr. *mignon*).

50. *solicits*, solicitations.

When you have given good morning to your mistress,

Attend the queen and us; we shall have need
To employ you towards this Roman.—Come, our queen!
[*Exeunt all except Cloten.*]

Cloten. If she be up, I'll speak with her; if not,
Let her lie still and dream.—By your leave, ho!

[*Knocks.*]

I know her women are about her; what
If I do line one of their hands? 'T is gold 70
Which buys admittance—oft it doth—yea, and makes

Diana's rangers false themselves, yield up
Their deer to the stand of the stealer; and 't is gold
Which makes the true man killed, and saves the thief;

Nay, sometime hangs both thief and true man.
What

Can it not do and undo? I will make
One of her women lawyer to me, for
I yet not understand the case myself.
By your leave!

[*Knocks.*]

Enter a Lady.

Lady. Who's there that knocks?

Cloten. A gentleman.

Lady. No more? 80

Cloten. Yes, and a gentlewoman's son.

Lady. That's more

Than some, whose tailors are as dear as yours,
Can justly boast of. What's your lordship's pleasure?

72. *rangers*, keepers of a deer-park.

73. *stand*, place for shooting from.

Cloten. Your lady's person; is she ready?

Lady. Ay,
To keep her chamber.

Cloten. There is gold for you;
Sell me your good report.

Lady. How? my good name, or to report of you
What I shall think is good?—The princess!

Enter IMOGEN.

Cloten. Good morrow, fairest! Sister, your sweet
hand! *[Exit Lady.]*

Imogen. Good morrow, sir! You lay out too
much pains 90

For purchasing but trouble; the thanks I give
Is telling you that I am poor of thanks,
And scarce can spare them.

Cloten. Still, I swear I love you.

Imogen. If you but said so, 't were as deep with me.
If you swear still, your recompense is still
That I regard it not.

Cloten. This is no answer.

Imogen. But that you shall not say, I yield being
silent,

I would not speak. I pray you, spare me. Faith!
I shall unfold equal discourtesy
To your best kindness. One of your great know-
ing 100

Should learn, being taught, forbearance.

Cloten. To leave you in your madness, 't were
my sin.

I will not.

Imogen. Fools cure not mad folks.

Cloten. Do you call me fool?

Imogen. As I am mad, I do.
 If you'll be patient, I'll no more be mad;
 That cures us both. I am much sorry, sir,
 You put me to forget a lady's manners,
 By being so verbal, and learn now, for all,
 That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce, 110
 By the very truth of it, I care not for you;
 And am so near the lack of charity,
 To accuse myself, I hate you, which I had rather
 You felt than make it my boast.

Cloten. You sin against
 Obedience, which you owe your father. For
 The contract you pretend with that base wretch,
 One bred of alms, and fostered with cold dishes,
 With scraps of the court, it is no contract, none.
 And though it be allowed in meaner parties—
 Yet who than he more mean?—to knit their souls, 120
 On whom there is no more dependency
 But brats and beggary, in self-figured knot,
 Yet you are curbed from that enlargement by
 The consequence of the crown, and must not foil
 The precious note of it with a base slave,
 A hilding for a livery, a squire's cloth,
 A pantler, not so eminent.

Imogen. Profane fellow!
 Wert thou the son of Jupiter, and no more
 But what thou art besides, thou wert too base
 To be his groom. Thou wert dignified enough, 130
 Even to the point of envy, if't were made
 Comparative for your virtues, to be styled
 The under-hangman of his kingdom; and hated
 For being preferred so well.

109. *verbal*, full of protests.126. *hilding*, menial.127. *pantler*, pantry-servant.

Cloten.

The south-fog rot him!

Imogen. He never can meet more mischance than
come

To be but named of thee. His meanest garment,
That ever hath but clipped his body, is dearer
In my respect than all the hairs above thee,
Were they all made such men.

Enter PISANIO.

—How now, Pisanio!

Cloten. 'His garment!' How, the devil— 140*Imogen.* To Dorothy my woman hie thee presently—*Cloten.* 'His garment!'*Imogen.*

I am sprited with a fool;

Frighted, and angered worse. Go bid my woman
Search for a jewel that too casually
Hath left mine arm. It was thy master's; shrew
me,

If I would lose it for a revenue

Of any king's in Europe. I do think

I saw it this morning; confident I am

Last night it was on mine arm; I kissed it.

I hope it be not gone to tell my lord

That I kiss aught but he. 150

Pisanio.

'T will not be lost.

Imogen. I hope so. Go and search! [*Exit Pisanio.*]*Cloten.*

You have abused me.

'His meanest garment!'

Imogen.

Ay, I said so, sir.

If you will make it an action, call witness to it.

142. *sprited*, haunted.145. *shrew*, beshrew, curse.

Cloten. I will inform your father.

Imogen.

Your mother too.

She's my good lady; and will conceive, I hope,

But the worst of me. So, I leave you, sir,

To the worst of discontent.

[*Exit.*]

Cloten.

I'll be revenged.

'His meanest garment!' Well!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. *Rome. Philario's house.*

Enter POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO.

Posthumus. Fear it not, sir! I would I were so
sure

To win the king, as I am bold her honour

Will remain hers.

Philario. What means do you make to him?

Posthumus. Not any; but abide the change of
time;

Quake in the present winter's state, and wish

That warmer days would come. In these feared
hopes,

I barely gratify your love; they failing,

I must die much your debtor.

Philario. Your very goodness and your company
O'er pays all I can do. By this, your king 10
Hath heard of great Augustus. Caius Lucius
Will do his commission throughly; and I think
He'll grant the tribute, send the arrearsages,
Or look upon our Romans, whose remembrance
Is yet fresh in their grief.

Posthumus.

I do believe,

Statist though I am none, nor like to be,

That this will prove a war, and you shall hear
The legions now in Gallia sooner landed
In our not-fearing Britain than have tidings
Of any penny tribute paid. Our countrymen 20
Are men more ordered than when Julius Cæsar
Smiled at their lack of skill, but found their courage
Worthy his frowning at. Their discipline
Now mingled with their courages will make known
To their approvers they are people such
That mend upon the world.

Philario.

See! Iachimo!

Enter IACHIMO.

Posthumus. The swiftest harts have posted you by
land,
And winds of all the corners kissed your sails,
To make your vessel nimble.

Philario.

Welcome, sir!

Posthumus. I hope the briefness of your answer
made 30
The speediness of your return.

Iachimo.

Your lady
Is one of the fairest that I have looked upon.

Posthumus. And therewithal the best; or let her
beauty
Look through a casement to allure false hearts,
And be false with them.

Iachimo.

Here are letters for you.

Posthumus. Their tenour good, I trust.

Iachimo.

'Tis very like.

Philario. Was Caius Lucius in the Britain court
When you were there?

25. *approvers*, those who make trial of them.

Iachimo. He was expected then,
But not approached.

Posthumus. All is well yet.
Sparkles this stone as it was wont, or is it not 40
Too dull for your good wearing?

Iachimo. If I have lost it,
I should have lost the worth of it in gold.
I'll make a journey twice as far, to enjoy
A second night of such sweet shortness which
Was mine in Britain; for the ring is won.

Posthumus. The stone's too hard to come by.

Iachimo. Not a whit,
Your lady being so easy.

Posthumus. Make not, sir,
Your loss your sport. I hope you know that we
Must not continue friends.

Iachimo. Good sir, we must,
If you keep covenant. Had I not brought 50
The knowledge of your mistress home, I grant
We were to question further; but I now
Profess myself the winner of her honour,
Together with your ring, and not the wronger
Of her or you, having proceeded but
By both your wills.

Posthumus. If you can make it apparent
That you have tasted her in bed, my hand
And ring is yours. If not, the foul opinion
You had of her pure honour gains or loses
Your sword or mine, or masterless leaves both 60
To who shall find them.

Iachimo. Sir, my circumstances,
Being so near the truth as I will make them,

Must first induce you to believe; whose strength
I will confirm with oath, which, I doubt not,
You'll give me leave to spare, when you shall find
You need it not.

Posthumus. Proceed!

Iachimo. First, her bedchamber—
Where I confess I slept not, but profess
Had that was well worth watching—it was hanged
With tapestry of silk and silver; the story
Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman, 70
And Cydnus swelled above the banks, or for
The press of boats or pride; a piece of work
So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive
In workmanship and value, which I wondered
Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,
Since the true life on it was—

Posthumus. This is true;
And this you might have heard of here, by me
Or by some other.

Iachimo. More particulars
Must justify my knowledge.

Posthumus. So they must,
Or do your honour injury.

Iachimo. The chimney 80
Is south the chamber, and the chimney-piece
Chaste Dian bathing. Never saw I figures
So likely to report themselves; the cutter
Was as another Nature, dumb; outwent her,
Motion and breath left out.

Posthumus. This is a thing
Which you might from relation likewise reap,
Being, as it is, much spoke of.

Iachimo. The roof of the chamber

With golden cherubins is fretted. Her andirons—
 I had forgot them—were two winking Cupids
 Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely 90
 Depending on their brands.

Posthumus. This is her honour!
 Let it be granted you have seen all this—and praise
 Be given to your remembrance—the description
 Of what is in her chamber nothing saves
 The wager you have laid.

Iachimo. Then, if you can,
 [Pulling out the bracelet.
 Be pale. I beg but leave to air this jewel. See!
 And now 't is up again. It must be married
 To that your diamond; I'll keep them.

Posthumus. Jove!
 Once more let me behold it. Is it that
 Which I left with her?

Iachimo. Sir—I thank her—that. 100
 She stripped it from her arm; I see her yet.
 Her pretty action did outsell her gift,
 And yet enriched it too. She gave it me, and
 said
 She prized it once.

Posthumus. May be she plucked it off
 To send it me.

Iachimo. She writes so to you, doth she?

Posthumus. O, no, no, no! 't is true. Here, take
 this too. [Gives the ring.

It is a basilisk unto mine eye,
 Kills me to look on it. Let there be no honour

88. *fretted*, patterned.

88. *andirons*, fire-dogs.

91. *depending on*, supported by.

107. *basilisk*, a fabulous serpent.

Where there is beauty; truth, where semblance;
love,

Where there's another man. The vows of women 110
Of no more bondage be, to where they are made,
Than they are to their virtues, which is nothing.
O, above measure false!

Philario. Have patience, sir,
And take your ring again! 't is not yet won.
It may be probable she lost it; or
Who knows if one of her women, being corrupted,
Hath stolen it from her?

Posthumus. Very true;
And so, I hope, he came by it.—Back my ring!
Render to me some corporal sign about her,
More evident than this; for this was stolen. 120

Iachimo. By Jupiter, I had it from her arm.

Posthumus. Hark you, he swears; by Jupiter he
swears.

'T is true—nay, keep the ring!—'t is true. I am
sure

She would not lose it; her attendants are
All sworn and honourable—they induced to steal
it,

And by a stranger! No, he hath enjoyed her.
The cognisance of her incontinency
Is this; she hath bought the name of whore thus
dearly.

There, take thy hire, and all the fiends of hell
Divide themselves between you!

Philario. Sir, be patient! 130
This is not strong enough to be believed
Of one persuaded well of.

111. *bondage*, binding force.

(B 755)

127. *cognisance*, token.

Posthumus. Never talk on it!
She hath been colted by him.

Iachimo. If you seek
For further satisfying, under her breast—
Worthy the pressing—lies a mole, right proud
Of that most delicate lodging. By my life,
I kissed it; and it gave me present hunger
To feed again, though full. You do remember
This stain upon her?

Posthumus. Ay, and it doth confirm
Another stain, as big as hell can hold, 140
Were there no more but it.

Iachimo. Will you hear more?

Posthumus. Spare your arithmetic; never count
the turns;
Once, and a million!

Iachimo. I'll be sworn—

Posthumus. No swearing!
If you will swear you have not done it, you lie;
And I will kill thee, if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold.

Iachimo. I'll deny nothing.

Posthumus. O, that I had her here, to tear her
limb-meal!
I will go there and do it, in the court, before
Her father. I'll do something. [Exit.

Philario. Quite besides
The government of patience!—You have won. 150
Let's follow him, and pervert the present wrath
He hath against himself.

Iachimo. With all my heart. [Exeunt.

SCENE V. *The same.**Enter* POSTHUMUS.

Posthumus. Is there no way for men to be, but
women

Must be half-workers? We are all bastards;
And that most venerable man which I
Did call my father, was I know not where
When I was stamped. Some coiner with his tools
Made me a counterfeit; yet my mother seemed
The Dian of that time; so doth my wife
The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance!
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained,
And prayed me oft forbearance; did it with 10
A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on it
Might well have warmed old Saturn, that I thought
her

As chaste as unsunned snow. O, all the devils!
This yellow Iachimo, in an hour—was it not?—
Or less—at first? Perchance he spoke not, but,
Like a full-acorned boar, a German one,
Cried, ‘O!’ and mounted; found no opposition
But what he looked for should oppose, and she
Should from encounter guard. Could I find out
The woman’s part in me; for there’s no motion 20
That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
It is the woman’s part. Be it lying, note it,
The woman’s; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;
Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,
Nice longing, slanders, mutability,

8. *nonpareil*, unparalleled one.

11. *pudency*, shamefastness.

All faults that may be named, nay, that hell knows,
Why, hers, in part or all. But rather, all;

For even to vice

They are not constant, but are changing still 30

One vice, but of a minute old, for one

Not half so old as that. I'll write against them,

Detest them, curse them; yet 't is greater skill

In a true hate, to pray they have their will.

The very devils cannot plague them better. [*Exit.*]

ACT III

SCENE I. *Britain. Cymbeline's palace.*

*Enter in state CYMBELINE, Queen, CLOTEN and
Lords at one door; and at another CAIUS LUCIUS
and Attendants.*

Cymbeline. Now say, what would Augustus Cæsar
with us?

Lucius. When Julius Cæsar—whose remembrance
yet

Lives in men's eyes, and will to ears and tongues
Be theme and hearing ever—was in this Britain
And conquered it, Cassibulan, thine uncle—
Famous in Cæsar's praises, no whit less
Than in his feats deserving it—for him
And his succession granted Rome a tribute,
Yearly three thousand pounds; which by thee lately
Is left untendered.

Queen. And, to kill the marvel, 10
Shall be so ever.

Cloten. There be many Cæsars,

Ere such another Julius. Britain is
A world by itself; and we will nothing pay
For wearing our own noses.

Queen.

That opportunity,
Which then they had to take from us, to resume
We have again.—Remember, sir, my liege,
The kings your ancestors, together with
The natural bravery of your isle, which stands
As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in
With rocks unscaleable and roaring waters, 20
With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats,
But suck them up to the topmast. A kind of con-
quest

Cæsar made here; but made not here his brag
Of 'Came, and saw, and overcame'. With shame,
The first that ever touched him, he was carried
From off our coast, twice beaten, and his shipping,
Poor ignorant baubles, on our terrible seas,
Like egg-shells moved upon their surges, cracked
As easily 'gainst our rocks; for joy whereof
The famed Cassibulan, who was once at point— 30
O giglet Fortune!—to master Cæsar's sword,
Made Lud's-town with rejoicing fires bright,
And Britons strut with courage.

Cloten. Come, there's no more tribute to be paid.
Our kingdom is stronger than it was at that time;
and, as I said, there is no more such Cæsars. Other
of them may have crooked noses; but to owe such
straight arms, none.

Cymbeline. Son, let your mother end.

16. *liege*, feudal lord.

32. *Lud's-town*, London.

31. *giglet*, wanton.

36. *more*, more.

37. *owe*, own.

Cloten. We have yet many among us can gripe 40
as hard as Cassibulan. I do not say I am one; but
I have a hand. Why tribute? why should we pay
tribute? If Cæsar can hide the sun from us with
a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will
pay him tribute for light; else, sir, no more tribute,
pray you now.

Cymbeline. You must know,
Till the injurious Romans did extort
This tribute from us, we were free. Cæsar's am-
bition,

Which swelled so much, that it did almost stretch 50
The sides of the world, against all colour, here
Did put the yoke upon us; which to shake off
Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon
Ourselves to be; we do. Say, then, to Cæsar,
Our ancestor was that Mulmutius which
Ordained our laws, whose use the sword of Cæsar
Hath too much mangled, whose repair and fran-
chise

Shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed,
Though Rome be therefore angry. Mulmutius,
made our laws,

Who was the first of Britain which did put 60
His brows within a golden crown, and called
Himself a king.

Lucius. I am sorry, Cymbeline,
That I am to pronounce Augustus Cæsar—
Cæsar, that hath moe kings his servants than
Thyself domestic officers—thine enemy.
Receive it from me, then. War and confusion
In Cæsar's name pronounce I 'gainst thee. Look

For fury not to be resisted. Thus defied,
I thank thee for myself.

Cymbeline.

Thou art welcome, Caius.

Thy Cæsar knighted me; my youth I spent 70
Much under him; of him I gathered honour.
Which he to seek of me again, perforce,
Behoves me keep at utterance. I am perfect
That the Pannonians and Dalmatians for
Their liberties are now in arms—a precedent
Which not to read would show the Britons cold.
So Cæsar shall not find them.

Lucius.

Let proof speak.

Cloten. His majesty bids you welcome. Make
pastime with us a day or two, or longer; if you
seek us afterwards in other terms, you shall find us 80
in our salt-water girdle. If you beat us out of it,
it is yours; if you fall in the adventure, our crows
shall fare the better for you; and there's an end.

Lucius. So, sir.

Cymbeline. I know your master's pleasure, and he
mine.

All the remain is, welcome.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The same.*

Enter PISANIO reading of a letter.

Pisanio. How! of adultery? Wherefore write
you not

What monster's her accuser?—Leonatus!

O master! what a strange infection

Is fallen into thy ear! What false Italian,

73. *at utterance*, to the death (Fr. *à outrance*).

73. *perfect*, well informed.

86. *remain*, rest.

As poisonous-tongued as handed, hath prevailed
 On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal? No!
 She's punished for her truth; and undergoes,
 More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults
 As would take in some virtue. O my master!
 Thy mind to her is now as low as were 10
 Thy fortunes. How? That I should murder her,
 Upon the love, and truth, and vows, which I
 Have made to thy command?—I, her?—her blood?
 If it be so to do good service, never
 Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,
 That I should seem to lack humanity
 So much as this fact comes to? [*Reading.*] 'Do it!
 the letter
 That I have sent her, by her own command
 Shall give thee opportunity.'—O damned paper,
 Black as the ink that's on thee, senseless bauble! 20
 Art thou a fedary for this act, and lookest
 So virgin-like without?—Lo, here she comes!
 I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

Enter IMOGEN.

Imogen. How now, Pisanio!

Pisanio. Madam, here is a letter from my lord.

Imogen. Who? thy lord? that is my lord
 Leonatus?

O, learned indeed were that astronomer
 That knew the stars as I his characters;
 He'd lay the future open. You good gods,
 Let what is here contained relish of love, 30
 Of my lord's health, of his content—yet not
 That we two are asunder; let that grieve him.

21. *fedary*, confederate.

28. *characters*, handwriting.

Some griefs are medicinal; that is one of them,
For it doth physic love—of his content
All but in that. Good wax, thy leave! Blessed be
You bees that make these locks of counsel! Lovers
And men in dangerous bonds pray not alike.
Though forfeiters you cast in prison, yet
You clasp young Cupid's tables.—Good news, gods!

[*Reads.*

'Justice, and your father's wrath, should he take me 40
in his dominion, could not be so cruel to me, as you, O
the dearest of creatures, would even renew me with your
eyes. Take notice that I am in Cambria, at Milford-
Haven; what your own love will, out of this, advise you,
follow. So, he wishes you all happiness, that remains
loyal to his vow, and your increasing in love

LEONATUS POSTHUMUS.'

O, for a horse with wings!—Hearest thou, Pisanio?
He is at Milford-Haven. Read, and tell me
How far 't is thither. If one of mean affairs 50
May plod it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day? Then, true Pisanio,
Who longest, like me, to see thy lord; who longest—
O, let me bate—but not like me; yet longest,
But in a fainter kind—O, not like me,
For mine's beyond beyond—say, and speak thick—
Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing,
To the smothering of the sense—how far it is
To this same blessed Milford; and, by the way,
Tell me how Wales was made so happy as 60
To inherit such a haven; but, first of all,
How we may steal from hence, and for the gap

33. *medicinal*, medicinal.

39. *tables*, tablets.

54. *bate*, modify my saying.

That we shall make in time, from our hence-going
 And our return, to excuse; but first, how get hence.
 Why should excuse be born or e'er begot?
 We'll talk of that hereafter. Prithee, speak!
 How many score of miles may we well ride
 'Twixt hour and hour?

Pisanio. One score 'twixt sun and sun,
 Madam, 's enough for you, and too much too.

Imogen. Why, one that rode to his execution,
 man, 70
 Could never go so slow. I have heard of riding
 wagers,
 Where horses have been nimbler than the sands
 That run in the clock's behalf.—But this is foolery.
 Go bid my woman feign a sickness, say
 She'll home to her father; and provide me presently
 A riding-suit, no costlier than would fit
 A franklin's housewife.

Pisanio. Madam, you're best consider.

Imogen. I see before me, man; not here, nor here,
 Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them,
 That I cannot look through. Away, I prithee! 80
 Do as I bid thee; there's no more to say.
 Accessible is none but Milford way. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Wales. Before a cave.*

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

Belarius. A goodly day not to keep house, with
 such
 Whose roof's as low as ours! Stoop, boys! this
 gate

77. franklin, yeoman.

Instructs you how to adore the heavens, and bows
you

To a morning's holy office. The gates of monarchs
Are arched so high, that giants may jet through
And keep their impious turbans on, without
Good morrow to the sun.—Hail, thou fair heaven!
We house in the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do.

Guiderius. Hail, heaven!

Arviragus. Hail, heaven!

Belarius. Now for our mountain sport; up to
yond hill! 10

Your legs are young; I'll tread these flats. Consider,
When you above perceive me like a crow,
That it is place which lessens and sets off;
And you may then revolve what tales I have told you
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war.
This service is not service, so being done,
But being so allowed. To apprehend thus,
Draws us a profit from all things we see;
And often, to our comfort, shall we find
The sharded beetle in a safer hold 20

Than is the full-winged eagle. O, this life
Is nobler than attending for a check,
Richer than doing nothing for a babe,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk.
Such gain the cap of him that makes 'em fine,
Yet keeps his book uncrossed—no life to ours.

Guiderius. Out of your proof you speak; we,
poor unfledged,
Have never winged from view of the nest, nor
knows not

5. jet, strut.

20. sharded, wing-cased.

What air's from home. Haply this life is best,
If quiet life be best, sweeter to you 30
That have a sharper known, well corresponding
With your stiff age; but unto us it is
A cell of ignorance, travelling a-bed,
A prison for a debtor, that not dares
To stride a limit.

Arviragus. What should we speak of
When we are old as you? When we shall hear
The rain and wind beat dark December, how,
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing;
We are beastly, subtle as the fox for prey; 40
Live warlike as the wolf for what we eat.
Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage
We make a quire, as doth the prisoned bird,
And sing our bondage freely.

Belarius. How you speak!
Did you but know the city's usuries,
And felt them knowingly; the art of the court,
As hard to leave as keep, whose top to climb
Is certain falling, or so slippery that
The fear's as bad as falling; the toil of the war,
A pain that only seems to seek out danger 50
In the name of fame and honour, which dies in the
search,
And hath as oft a slanderous epitaph
As record of fair act, nay, many times
Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse,
Must curtesy at the censure. O boys, this story
The world may read in me. My body's marked
With Roman swords; and my report was once

First with the best of note. Cymbeline loved me;
And when a soldier was the theme, my name
Was not far off. Then was I as a tree 60
Whose boughs did bend with fruit; but in one night,
A storm or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves,
And left me bare to weather.

Guiderius.

Uncertain favour!

Belarius. My fault being nothing, as I have told
you oft,

But that two villains, whose false oaths prevailed
Before my perfect honour, swore to Cymbeline
I was confederate with the Romans. So,
Followed my banishment; and, this twenty years,
This rock and these demesnes have been my world, 70
Where I have lived at honest freedom, paid
More pious debts to heaven than in all
The fore-end of my time.—But, up to the mountains!
This is not hunters' language. He that strikes
The venison first shall be the lord of the feast;
To him the other two shall minister;
And we will fear no poison, which attends
In place of greater state. I'll meet you in the
valleys. [*Exeunt Guiderius and Arviragus.*

How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!
These boys know little they are sons to the king; 80
Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
They think they are mine; and, though trained up
thus meanly
In the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them,
In simple and low things, to prince it much

Beyond the trick of others. This Polydore,
 The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, who
 The king his father called Guiderius—Jove!—
 When on my three-foot stool I sit, and tell
 The warlike feats I have done, his spirits fly out 90
 Into my story; say ‘Thus mine enemy fell,
 And thus I set my foot on ’s neck’, even then
 The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,
 Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture
 That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,
 Once Arviragus, in as like a figure
 Strikes life into my speech, and shows much more
 His own conceiving.—Hark, the game is roused!—
 O Cymbeline! heaven and my conscience knows
 Thou didst unjustly banish me; whereon, 100
 At three and two years old, I stole these babes,
 Thinking to bar thee of succession, as
 Thou reftest me of my lands! Euriphile,
 Thou wast their nurse; they took thee for their
 mother,
 And every day do honour to her grave.
 Myself, Belarius, that am Morgan called,
 They take for natural father.—The game is up!
 [Exit.]

SCENE IV. *Wales. Near Milford-Haven.*

Enter PISANIO and IMOGEN.

Imogen. Thou toldest me, when we came from
 horse, the place
 Was near at hand; ne’er longed my mother so
 To see me first, as I have now—Pisanio! man!

Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind,
That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that
sigh

From the inward of thee? One, but painted thus,
Would be interpreted a thing perplexed
Beyond self-explication. Put thyself
Into a haviour of less fear, ere wildness
Vanquish my staid senses. What's the matter? 10
Why tenderest thou that paper to me, with
A look untender! If it be summer news,
Smile to it before; if winterly, thou needest
But keep that countenance still.—My husband's
hand!

That drug-damned Italy hath out-craftied him,
And he's at some hard point.—Speak, man! thy
tongue

May take off some extremity, which to read
Would be even mortal to me.

Pisano.

Please you, read!

And you shall find me, wretched man, a thing
The most disdained of fortune. 20

Imogen. [*Reads.*] 'Thy mistress, Pisanio, hath played
the strumpet in my bed; the testimonies whereof lies
bleeding in me. I speak not out of weak surmises; but
from proof as strong as my grief, and as certain as I ex-
pect my revenge. That part thou, Pisanio, must act for
me, if thy faith be not tainted with the breach of hers.
Let thine own hands take away her life; I shall give thee
opportunity at Milford-Haven. She hath my letter for
the purpose, where, if thou fear to strike, and to make
me certain it is done, thou art the pander to her dis- 30
honour, and equally to me disloyal.'

Pisano. What shall I need to draw my sword?
The paper

Hath cut her throat already. No, 't is slander,
 Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
 Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
 Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
 All corners of the world. Kings, queens, and
 states,

Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave
 This viperous slander enters.—What cheer, madam?

Imogen. False to his bed! What is it to be false? 40
 To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
 To weep 'twixt clock and clock? If sleep charge
 nature,

To break it with a fearful dream of him,
 And cry myself awake? That's false to his bed,
 is it?

Pisanio. Alas, good lady!

Imogen. I false! Thy conscience witness!—Ia-
 chimo,

Thou didst accuse him of incontinency.
 Thou then lookedst like a villain; now, methinks,
 Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy,
 Whose mother was her painting, hath betrayed
 him. 50

Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;
 And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,
 I must be ripped; to pieces with me!—O,
 Men's vows are women's traitors! All good seem-
 ing,

By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought
 Put on for villainy; not born where it grows,
 But worn a bait for ladies.

Pisanio.

Good madam, hear me!

Imogen. True honest men being heard, like false

Æneas,

Were, in his time, thought false; and Sinon's weeping

Did scandal many a holy tear, took pity 60

From most true wretchedness. So thou, Posthumus,

Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men.

Goodly and gallant shall be false and perjured

From thy great fail.—Come, fellow, be thou honest!

Do thou thy master's bidding! When thou seest him,

A little witness my obedience. Look!

I draw the sword myself; take it, and hit

The innocent mansion of my love, my heart.

Fear not! 't is empty of all things but grief.

Thy master is not there; who was, indeed, 70

The riches of it. Do his bidding; strike!

Thou mayst be valiant in a better cause;

But now thou seemest a coward.

Pisanio.

Hence, vile instrument!

Thou shalt not damn my hand.

Imogen.

Why, I must die;

And if I do not by thy hand, thou art

No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter

There is a prohibition so divine

That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart!

Something's afore it—soft, soft! we'll no defence,

Obedient as the scabbard.—What is here? 80

The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus

All turned to heresy? Away, away,

Corrupters of my faith! you shall no more

78. *cravens*, makes cowardly.

(B 755)

81. *scriptures*, writings.

Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor
fools

Believe false teachers. Though those that are
betrayed

Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor
Stands in worse case of woe. And thou, Posthumus,
That didst set up

My disobedience 'gainst the king my father,
And make me put into contempt the suits 90
Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find

It is no act of common passage, but
A strain of rareness; and I grieve myself
To think, when thou shalt be disedged by her
That now thou tirest on, how thy memory
Will then be panged by me.—Prithee, dispatch!
The lamb entreats the butcher. Where's thy
knife?

Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,
When I desire it too.

Pisanio. O gracious lady,
Since I received command to do this business, 100
I have not slept one wink.

Imogen. Do it, and to bed then!

Pisanio. I'll wake mine eyeballs blind first.

Imogen. Wherefore, then,
Didst undertake it? Why hast thou abused
So many miles with a pretence? this place?
Mine action, and thine own? our horses' labour?
The time inviting thee? the perturbed court
For my being absent, whereunto I never
Purpose return? Why hast thou gone so far,

84. *stomachers*, bodices.
95. *tirest*, preyest.

94. *disedged*, cloyed.
102. *wake*, watch.

To be unbent when thou hast ta'en thy stand,
The elected deer before thee?

Pisania. But to win time 110
To lose so bad employment; in the which
I have considered of a course. Good lady,
Hear me with patience!

Imogen. Talk thy tongue weary; speak!
I have heard I am a strumpet; and mine ear,
Therein false strook, can take no greater wound,
Nor tent to bottom that. But speak!

Pisania. Then, madam,
I thought you would not back again.

Imogen. Most like,
Bringing me here to kill me.

Pisania. Not so, neither.
But if I were as wise as honest, then
My purpose would prove well. It cannot be 120
But that my master is abused.
Some villain, ay, and singular in his art,
Hath done you both this cursèd injury.

Imogen. Some Roman courtesan.

Pisania. No, on my life!
I'll give but notice you are dead, and send him
Some bloody sign of it; for 't is commanded
I should do so. You shall be missed at court,
And that will well confirm it.

Imogen. Why, good fellow,
What shall I do the while? where bide? how live?
Or in my life what comfort, when I am 130
Dead to my husband?

Pisania. If you'll back to the court—

110. *elected*, selected.

115. *strook*, struck.

116. *tent*, dressing for a wound.

Imogen. No court, no father; nor no more ado
With that harsh, nothing noble, simple nothing,
That Cloten, whose love-suit hath been to me
As fearful as a siege.

Pisanio. If not at court,
Then not in Britain must you bide.

Imogen. Where then?
Hath Britain all the sun that shines? Day, night,
Are they not but in Britain? In the world's volume
Our Britain seems as of it, but not in it;
In a great pool a swan's nest. Prithee, think 140
There's livers out of Britain.

Pisanio. I am most glad
You think of other place. The ambassador,
Lucius the Roman, comes to Milford-Haven
To-morrow. Now, if you could wear a mind
Dark as your fortune is, and but disguise
That which, to appear itself, must not yet be
But by self-danger, you should tread a course
Pretty and full of view; yea, happily, near
The residence of Posthumus, so nigh at least
That though his actions were not visible, yet 150
Report should render him hourly to your ear
As truly as he moves.

Imogen. O, for such means!
Though peril to my modesty, not death on it,
I would adventure.

Pisanio. Well, then, here's the point.
You must forget to be a woman; change
Command into obedience; fear and niceness—
The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,

Woman it pretty self—into a waggish courage;
 Ready in gibes, quick-answered, saucy and
 As quarrelous as the weasel; nay, you must 160
 Forget that rarest treasure of your cheek,
 Exposing it—but, O, the harder heart!
 Alack, no remedy!—to the greedy touch
 Of common-kissing Titan; and forget
 Your laboursome and dainty trims, wherein
 You made great Juno angry.

Imogen

Nay, be brief!

I see into thy end, and am almost
 A man already.

Pisano

First, make yourself but like one.

Fore-thinking this, I have already fit—
 'Tis in my cloak-bag—doublet, hat, hose, all 170
 That answer to them. Would you, in their serving,
 And with what imitation you can borrow
 From youth of such a season, 'fore noble Lucius
 Present yourself, desire his service, tell him
 Wherein you are happy—which you'll make him
 know,
 If that his head have ear in music—doubtless
 With joy he will embrace you; for he's honourable,
 And, doubling that, most holy. Your means
 abroad,
 You have me, rich; and I will never fail
 Beginning nor supplyment.

Imogen

Thou art all the comfort 180

The gods will diet me with. Prithee, away!
 There's more to be considered; but we'll even
 All that good time will give us. This attempt

158. *it*, a genitive form.

164. *Titan*, the sun.

160. *quarrelous*, quarrelsome.

165. *trims*, attire.

I am soldier to, and will abide it with
A prince's courage. Away, I prithee!

Pisanio. Well, madam, we must take a short farewell,

Lest, being missed, I be suspected of
Your carriage from the court. My noble mistress,
Here is a box; I had it from the queen.
What's in it is precious; if you are sick at sea, 190
Or stomach-qualmed at land, a dram of this
Will drive away distemper. To some shade,
And fit you to your manhood; may the gods
Direct you to the best!

Imogen. Amen! I thank thee. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *Cymbeline's palace.*

Enter CYMBELINE, Queen, CLOTEN, LUCIUS and Lords.

Cymbeline. Thus far; and so, farewell!

Lucius. Thanks, royal sir!

My emperor hath wrote, I must from hence;
And am right sorry that I must report ye
My master's enemy.

Cymbeline. Our subjects, sir,
Will not endure his yoke; and for ourself
To show less sovereignty than they must needs
Appear unkinglike.

Lucius. So, sir! I desire of you
A conduct overland to Milford-Haven.
—Madam, all joy befall your grace!

Queen. And you!

Cymbeline. My lords, you are appointed for that
office;

The due of honour in no point omit.

—So, farewell, noble Lucius!

Lucius. Your hand, my lord!

Cloten. Receive it friendly; but from this time
forth

I wear it as your enemy.

Lucius. Sir, the event

Is yet to name the winner. Fare you well!

Cymbeline. Leave not the worthy Lucius, good
my lords,

Till he have crossed the Severn.—Happiness!

[*Exeunt Lucius and Lords.*]

Queen. He goes hence frowning; but it honours
us

That we have given him cause.

Cloten.

'T is all the better;

Your valiant Britons have their wishes in it. 20

Cymbeline. Lucius hath wrote already to the em-
peror

How it goes here. It fits us therefore ripely
Our chariots and our horsemen be in readiness.
The powers that he already hath in Gallia
Will soon be drawn to head, from whence he moves
His war for Britain.

Queen.

'T is not sleepy business;

But must be looked to speedily and strongly.

Cymbeline. Our expectation that it would be thus
Hath made us forward. But, my gentle queen,
Where is our daughter? She hath not appeared 30
Before the Roman, nor to us hath tendered
The duty of the day; she looks us like
A thing more made of malice than of duty.
We have noted it.—Call her before us, for

We have been too slight in sufferance.

[*Exit a Messenger.*]

Queen.

Royal sir, .

Since the exile of Posthumus, most retired
Hath her life been; the cure whereof, my lord,
'Tis time must do. Beseech your majesty,
Forbear sharp speeches to her; she's a lady
So tender of rebukes, that words are strokes, 40
And strokes death to her.

Re-enter Messenger.

Cymbeline.

Where is she, sir? How
Can her contempt be answered?

Messenger.

Please you, sir,
Her chambers are all locked; and there's no answer
That will be given to the loudest of noise we make.

Queen. My lord, when last I went to visit her,
She prayed me to excuse her keeping close;
Whereto constrained by her infirmity,
She should that duty leave unpaid to you,
Which daily she was bound to proffer. This
She wished me to make known; but our great
court 50
Made me to blame in memory.

Cymbeline.

Her doors locked?
Not seen of late? Grant, heavens, that which I fear
Prove false! [Exit.]

Queen. Son, I say, follow the king!

Cloten. That man of hers, Pisanio, her old servant,
I have not seen these two days.

Queen.

Go, look after! [*Exit Cloten.*]

Pisanio, thou that standest so for Posthumus!
He hath a drug of mine; I pray his absence
Proceed by swallowing that, for he believes
It is a thing most precious. But for her,
Where is she gone? Haply, despair hath seized her; 60
Or, winged with fervour of her love, she's flown
To her desired Posthumus. Gone she is
To death or to dishonour; and my end
Can make good use of either. She being down,
I have the placing of the British crown.

Re-enter CLOTEN.

How now, my son?

Cloten. 'Tis certain she is fled.
Go in and cheer the king! he rages; none
Dare come about him.

Queen. [Aside.] All the better! may
This night forestall him of the coming day! [*Exit.*

Cloten. I love and hate her, for she's fair and royal, 70
And that she hath all courtly parts more exquisite
Than lady, ladies, woman; from every one
The best she hath, and she, of all compounded,
Outsells them all. I love her therefore, but
Disdaining me and throwing favours on
The low Posthumus slanders so her judgement,
That what's else rare is choked; and in that point
I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,
To be revenged upon her. For, when fools
Shall—

Enter PISANIO.

Who is here? What, are you packing, sirrah? 80
Come hither! Ah, you precious pander, villain,

69. *forestall*, rob.

80. *packing*, hurrying off.

Where is thy lady? In a word; or else
Thou art straightway with the fiends.

Pisanio.

O, good my lord!

Cloten. Where is thy lady? or, by Jupiter,
I will not ask again. Close villain,
I'll have this secret from thy heart, or rip
Thy heart to find it. Is she with Posthumus,
From whose so many weights of baseness cannot
A dram of worth be drawn?

Pisanio.

Alas, my lord,

How can she be with him? When was she missed? 90
He is in Rome.

Cloten.

Where is she, sir? Come nearer;
No further halting! satisfy me home
What is become of her.

Pisanio.

O, my all-worthy lord!

Cloten.

All-worthy villain!

Discover where thy mistress is at once,
At the next word; no more of 'worthy lord'!
Speak, or thy silence on the instant is
Thy condemnation and thy death.

Pisanio.

Then, sir,

This paper is the history of my knowledge
Touching her flight. [Presenting a letter.

Cloten.

Let's see it.—I will pursue her 100
Even to Augustus' throne.

Pisanio. [Aside.]

Or this, or perish.

She's far enough; and what he learns by this
May prove his travel, not her danger.

Cloten.

Hum!

Pisanio. [*Aside.*] I'll write to my lord she's dead.

O Imogen,

Safe mayest thou wander, safe return again!

Cloten. Sirrah, is this letter true?

Pisanio. Sir, as I think.

Cloten. It is Posthumus' hand; I know't. Sirrah, if thou wouldst not be a villain, but do me true service, undergo those employments wherein I 110 should have cause to use thee with a serious industry—that is, what villainy soe'er I bid thee do, to perform it directly and truly—I would think thee an honest man. Thou shouldst neither want my means for thy relief, nor my voice for thy preferment.

Pisanio. Well, my good lord.

Cloten. Wilt thou serve me? for since patiently and constantly thou hast stuck to the bare fortune of that beggar Posthumus, thou canst not, in the 120 course of gratitude, but be a diligent follower of mine. Wilt thou serve me?

Pisanio. Sir, I will.

Cloten. Give me thy hand; here's my purse. Hast any of thy late master's garments in thy possession?

Pisanio. I have, my lord, at my lodging, the same suit he wore when he took leave of my lady and mistress.

Cloten. The first service thou dost me, fetch that 130 suit hither; let it be thy first service; go!

Pisanio. I shall, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

Cloten. Meet thee at Milford-Haven!—I forgot to ask him one thing; I'll remember't anon.—Even there, thou villain Posthumus, will I kill thee.—I would these garments were come. She said upon a time—the bitterness of it I now belch from my heart—that she held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person, together with the adornment of my ¹⁴⁰ qualities. With that suit upon my back, will I ravish her; first kill him, and in her eyes; there shall she see my valour, which will then be a torment to her contempt. He on the ground, my speech of insultment ended on his dead body, and when my lust hath dined—which, as I say, to vex her I will execute in the clothes that she so praised—to the court I'll knock her back, foot her home again. She hath despised me rejoicingly, and I'll be merry in my revenge. 150

Re-enter PISANIO, with the clothes.

Be those the garments?

Pisanio. Ay, my noble lord.

Cloten. How long is't since she went to Milford-Haven?

Pisanio. She can scarce be there yet.

Cloten. Bring this apparel to my chamber; that is the second thing that I have commanded thee. The third is, that thou wilt be a voluntary mute to my design. Be but duteous, and true preferment shall tender itself to thee.—My revenge is now at Milford; ¹⁶⁰ would I had wings to follow it!—Come, and be true!

[Exit.]

Pisanio. Thou biddest me to my loss; for true to thee

Were to prove false, which I will never be,
To him that is most true. To Milford go,
And find not her whom thou pursuest. Flow, flow,
You heavenly blessings, on her! This fool's speed
Be crossed with slowness; labour be his meed!

[Exit.]

SCENE VI. *Wales. Before the cave of Belarius.*

Enter IMOGEN alone in boy's clothes.

Imogen. I see a man's life is a tedious one.
I have tired myself; and for two nights together
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick,
But that my resolution helps me.—Milford,
When from the mountain-top Pisanio showed thee,
Thou wast within a ken. O Jove! I think
Foundations fly the wretched; such, I mean,
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars told me
I could not miss my way; will poor folks lie,
That have afflictions on them, knowing 't is 10
A punishment or trial? Yes; no wonder,
When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in fulness
Is sorer than to lie for need; and falsehood
Is worse in kings than beggars.—My dear lord!
Thou art one of the false ones. Now I think on
thee

My hunger's gone; but even before I was
At point to sink for food.—But what is this?
Here is a path to it; 't is some savage hold.
I were best not call; I dare not call; yet famine,
Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant. 20
Plenty and peace breeds cowards; hardness ever
Of hardiness is mother.—Ho! who's here?

If any thing that's civil, speak; if savage,
Take or lend. Ho!—No answer? then I'll enter.
Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on it.
Such a foe, good heavens! [*Goes into the cave.*]

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.

Belarius. You, Polydore, have proved best wood-
man, and
Are master of the feast. Cadwal and I
Will play the cook and servant; 't is our match. 30
The sweat of industry would dry and die,
But for the end it works to. Come! our stomachs
Will make what's homely savoury. Weariness
Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth
Finds the down pillow hard.—Now, peace be here,
Poor house, that keepest thyself!

Guiderius. I am thoroughly weary.

Arviragus. I am weak with toil, yet strong in
appetite.

Guiderius. There is cold meat in the cave; we'll
browse on that,
Whilst what we have killed be cooked.

Belarius. Stay; come not in!
[*Looking into the cave.*]

But that it eats our victuals, I should think 40
Here were a fairy.

Guiderius. What's the matter, sir?

Belarius. By Jupiter, an angel, or, if not,
An earthly paragon! Behold divineness
No elder than a boy!

28. *woodman*, hunter.

34. *resty*, obstinate.

43. *paragon*, model.

Re-enter IMOGEN

Imogen. Good masters, harm me not!
Before I entered here, I called, and thought
To have begged or bought what I have took. Good
troth,
I have stolen naught, nor would not, though I had
found
Gold strewed in the floor. Here's money for my
meat!
I would have left it on the board, so soon 50
As I had made my meal; and parted
With prayers for the provider.

Guiderius. Money, youth?

Arviragus. All gold and silver rather turn to dirt,
As 't is no better reckoned, but of those
Who worship dirty gods!

Imogen. I see you are angry.
Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should
Have died had I not made it.

Belarius. Whither bound?

Imogen. To Milford-Haven.

Belarius. What's your name?

Imogen. Fidele, sir. I have a kinsman who 60
Is bound for Italy; he embarked at Milford;
To whom being going, almost spent with hunger,
I am fallen in this offence.

Belarius. Prithee, fair youth,
Think us no churls, nor measure our good minds
By this rude place we live in. Well encountered!
'T is almost night; you shall have better cheer
Ere you depart, and thanks to stay and eat it.
—Boys, bid him welcome!

Guiderius. Were you a woman, youth,
I should woo hard but be your groom in honesty.
I bid for you as I do buy.

Arviragus. I'll make it my comfort 70
He is a man; I'll love him as my brother.
And such a welcome as I'd give to him
After long absence, such is yours; most welcome!
Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.

Imogen. 'Mongst friends,
If brothers.—[*Aside.*] Would it had been so, that
they
Had been my father's sons! then had my prize
Been less, and so more equal ballasting
To thee, Posthumus.

Belarius. He wrings at some distress.

Guiderius. Would I could free it!

Arviragus. Or I, whate'er it be,
What pain it cost, what danger! Gods!

Belarius. Hark, boys! [*Whispering.* 80

Imogen. Great men,
That had a court no bigger than this cave,
That did attend themselves, and had the virtue
Which their own conscience sealed them, laying by
That nothing-gift of differing multitudes,
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,
Since Leonatus' false.

Belarius. It shall be so.
Boys, we'll go dress our hunt.—Fair youth, come in!
Discourse is heavy, fasting; when we have supped, 90

We'll mannerly demand thee of thy story,
So far as thou wilt speak it.

Guiderius. Pray, draw near!

Arviragus. The night to the owl, and morn to
the lark, less welcome.

Imogen. Thanks, sir!

Arviragus. I pray, draw near! [Exeunt.

SCENE VII. *Rome. An open place.*

Enter two Roman Senators and Tribunes.

First Senator. This is the tenour of the emperor's
writ,

That since the common men are now in action
'Gainst the Pannonians and Dalmatians,
And that the legions now in Gallia are
Full weak to undertake our wars against
The fallen-off Britons, that we do incite
The gentry to this business. He creates
Lucius pro-consul, and to you the tribunes,
For this immediate levy, he commands
His absolute commission. Long live Cæsar! 10

First Tribune. Is Lucius general of the forces?

Second Senator. Ay.

First Tribune. Remaining now in Gallia?

First Senator. With those legions
Which I have spoke of, whereunto your levy
Must be suppliant. The words of your commission
Will tie you to the numbers, and the time
Of their dispatch.

First Tribune. We will discharge our duty.
[Exeunt.

14. *suppliant*, auxiliary.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Wales. Before the cave of Belarius.**Enter CLOTEN alone.*

Cloten. I am near to th' place where they should meet, if Pisanio have mapped it truly. How fit his garments serve me! Why should his mistress, who was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit too? the rather—saving reverence of the word—for 't is said a woman's fitness comes by fits. Therein I must play the workman. I dare speak it to myself—for it is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer in his own chamber—I mean, the lines of my body are as well drawn as his; no less young, 10 more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike conversant in general services, and more remarkable in single oppositions; yet this imperseverant thing loves him in my despite. What mortality is! Posthumus, thy head, which now is growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off, thy mistress enforced, thy garments cut to pieces before her face; and all this done, spurn her home to her father, who may happily be a little 20 angry for my so rough usage; but my mother, having power of his testiness, shall turn all into my commendations. My horse is tied up safe; out, sword, and to a sore purpose! Fortune, put them into my hand! This is the very description of their meeting-place; and the fellow dares not deceive me. [Exit.

13. *services*, warfare.14. *oppositions*, combats.14. *imperseverant*, undiscerning.

SCENE II. *The same.*

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS *and*
IMOGEN *from the cave.*

Belarius. [*To Imogen.*] You are not well; remain
here in the cave;
We'll come to you after hunting.

Arviragus. [*To Imogen.*] Brother, stay here!
Are we not brothers?

Imogen. So man and man should be;
But clay and clay differs in dignity,
Whose dust is both alike. I am very sick.

Guiderius. Go you to hunting! I'll abide with
him.

Imogen. So sick I am not, yet I am not well;
But not so citizen a wanton as
To seem to die ere sick. So please you, leave me;
Stick to your journal course; the breach of custom ¹⁰
Is breach of all. I am ill, but your being by me
Cannot amend me; society is no comfort
To one not sociable. I am not very sick,
Since I can reason of it. Pray you, trust me here!
I'll rob none but myself, and let me die,
Stealing so poorly.

Guiderius. I love thee; I have spoke it;
How much the quantity, the weight as much,
As I do love my father.

Belarius. What? how! how!

Arviragus. If it be sin to say so, sir, I yoke me
In my good brother's fault. I know not why ²⁰
I love this youth; and I have heard you say,

Love's reason's without reason. The bier at door,
And a demand who is it shall die, I'd say,
'My father, not this youth'.

Belarius. [*Aside.*] O noble strain!
O worthiness of nature, breed of greatness!
Cowards father cowards, and base things sire base;
Nature hath meal and bran, contempt and grace.
I am not their father; yet who this should be
Doth miracle itself, loved before me.
—'T is the ninth hour of the morn.

Arviragus. Brother, farewell! 30

Imogen. I wish ye sport.

Arviragus. You health.—So please you, sir.

Imogen. [*Aside.*] These are kind creatures. Gods,
what lies I have heard!

Our courtiers say all's savage but at court;
Experience, O, thou disproveest report!
The imperious seas breeds monsters; for the dish
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish.
I am sick still, heart-sick.—Pisanio,
I'll now taste of thy drug.

Guiderius. [*Aside to Arviragus.*] I could not stir
him.

He said he was gentle, but unfortunate;
Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest. 40

Arviragus. Thus did he answer me; yet said,
hereafter

I might know more.

Belarius. To the field, to the field!

—[*To Imogen.*] We'll leave you for this time; go
in and rest.

Arviragus. We'll not be long away.

Belarius.

Pray, be not sick,

For you must be our housewife.

Imogen.

Well or ill,

I am bound to you.

Belarius.

And shalt be ever.

[*Exit Imogen into the cave.*]

This youth, howe'er distressed, appears he hath had
Good ancestors.

Arviragus. How angel-like he sings!

Guiderius. But his neat cookery! he cut our roots
in characters,

And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick, 50
And he her dieter.

Arviragus. Nobly he yokes

A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
Was that it was for not being such a smile;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.

Guiderius.

I do note

That grief and patience, rooted in him both,
Mingle their spurs together.

Arviragus.

Grow, patience!

And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine
His perishing root with the increasing vine! 60

Belarius. It is great morning. Come, away!—

Who's there?

Enter CLOTEN.

Cloten. I cannot find those runagates; that villain
Hath mocked me. I am faint.

Belarius

'Those runagates!'

Means he not us? I partly know him; 'tis
 Cloten, the son of the queen. I fear some ambush.
 I saw him not these many years, and yet
 I know 't is he. We are held as outlaws; hence!

Guiderius. He is but one. You and my brother
 search

What companies are near; pray you, away;
 Let me alone with him!

[*Exeunt Belarius and Arviragus.*

Cloten.

Soft!—What are you

70

That fly me thus? some villain mountaineers?
 I have heard of such. What slave art thou?

Guiderius.

A thing

More slavish did I ne'er than answering
 A 'slave' without a knock.

Cloten.

Thou art a robber.

A law-breaker, a villain. Yield thee, thief!

Guiderius. To who? to thee? What art thou?

Have not I

An arm as big as thine, a heart as big?
 Thy words, I grant, are bigger; for I wear not
 My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art,
 Why I should yield to thee?

Cloten.

Thou villain base,

80

Knowest me not by my clothes?

Guiderius.

No, nor thy tailor, rascal,

Who is thy grandfather. He made those clothes,
 Which, as it seems, make thee.

Cloten.

Thou precious varlet,

My tailor made them not.

Guiderius.

Hence, then, and thank

The man that gave them thee. Thou art some fool;
I am loth to beat thee.

Cloten. Thou injurious thief,
Hear but my name, and tremble.

Guiderius. What's thy name?

Cloten. Cloten, thou villain.

Guiderius. Cloten, thou double villain, be thy
name,
I cannot tremble at it. Were it Toad, or Adder,
Spider,
'T would move me sooner. 90

Cloten. To thy further fear,
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know
I am son to the queen.

Guiderius. I'm sorry for it; not seeming
So worthy as thy birth.

Cloten. Art not afeard?

Guiderius. Those that I reverence, those I fear,
the wise.
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

Cloten. Die the death!
When I have slain thee with my proper hand,
I'll follow those that even now fled hence,
And on the gates of Lud's-town set your heads.
Yield, rustic mountaineer! [Exeunt fighting. 100

Re-enter BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS.

Belarius. No company's abroad?

Arviragus. None in the world; you did mistake
him, sure.

86. *injurious*, insulting. 92. *mere*, unqualified.

97. *proper*, own.

Belarius. I cannot tell. Long is it since I saw him,

But time hath nothing blurred those lines of favour
Which then he wore; the snatches in his voice
And burst of speaking were as his. I am absolute
'T was very Cloten.

Arviragus. In this place we left them.
I wish my brother make good time with him,
You say he is so fell.

Belarius. Being scarce made up,
I mean, to man, he had not apprehension
Of roaring terrors; for defect of judgement
Is oft the cause of fear.—But, see, thy brother!

110

Re-enter GUIDERIUS with CLOTEN'S head.

Guiderius. This Cloten was a fool, an empty
purse;

There was no money in it. Not Hercules
Could have knocked out his brains, for he had
none;

Yet I not doing this, the fool had borne
My head as I do his.

Belarius. What hast thou done?

Guiderius. I am perfect what; cut off one Cloten's
head,

Son to the queen, after his own report,
Who called me traitor, mountaineer, and swore
With his own single hand he'd take us in,
Displace our heads where—thank the gods!—
they grow,

120

And set them on Lud's-town.

Belarius. We are all undone.

Guiderius. Why, worthy father, what have we to lose

But that he swore to take, our lives? The law
Protects not us; then why should we be tender
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us,
Play judge and executioner all himself,
For we do fear the law? What company
Discover you abroad?

Belarius.

No single soul

130

Can we set eye on; but in all safe reason
He must have some attendants. Though his
humour

Was nothing but mutation, ay, and that
From one bad thing to worse, not frenzy, not
Absolute madness could so far have raved,
To bring him here alone. Although, perhaps,
It may be heard at court, that such as we
Cave here, hunt here, are outlaws, and in time
May make some stronger head, the which he hear-
ing—

As it is like him—might break out, and swear
He 'ld fetch us in; yet is it not probable
To come alone, either he so undertaking,
Or they so suffering. Then on good ground we
fear,

140

If we do fear this body hath a tail,
More perilous than the head.

Arviragus.

Let ordinance

Come as the gods foresay it; howsoe'er,
My brother hath done well.

Belarius.

I had no mind

133. *mutation*, change.

145. *ordinance*, what is ordained.

To hunt this day; the boy Fidele's sickness
Did make my way long forth.

Guiderius. With his own sword,
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en 150
His head from him; I'll throw it into the creek
Behind our rock, and let it to the sea,
And tell the fishes he's the queen's son, Cloten.
That's all I reck. [Exit.

Belarius. I fear 't will be revenged.
Would, Polydore, thou hadst not done it, though
valour
Becomes thee well enough.

Arviragus. Would I had done it,
So the revenge alone pursued me!—Polydore,
I love thee brotherly, but envy much
Thou hast robbed me of this deed. I would
revenges,
That possible strength might meet, would seek us
through, 160
And put us to our answer.

Belarius. Well, 't is done.
We'll hunt no more to-day, nor seek for danger
Where there's no profit. I prithee, to our rock!
You and Fidele play the cooks; I'll stay
Till hasty Polydore return, and bring him
To dinner presently.

Arviragus. Poor sick Fidele!
I'll willingly to him; to gain his colour
I'd let a parish of such Clotens blood,
And praise myself for charity. [Exit.

Belarius. O thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazonest 170

154. *reck*, care.

170. *blazonest*, proclaimest thy family.

In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchain'd, as the rudest wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale. 'T is wonder
That an invisible instinct should frame them
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
Civility not seen from other, valour
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop 180
As if it had been sowed. Yet still it's strange
What Cloten's being here to us portends,
Or what his death will bring us.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS.

Guiderius. Where's my brother?
I have sent Cloten's clotpoll down the stream,
In embassy to his mother, his body's hostage
For his return. [Solemn music.

Belarius. My ingenious instrument!
Hark, Polydore, it sounds! But what occasion
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

Guiderius. Is he at home?

Belarius. He went hence even now.

Guiderius. What does he mean? since death of
my dearest mother 190
It did not speak before. All solemn things
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?
Triumphs for nothing and lamenting toys
Is jollity for apes, and grief for boys.
Is Cadwal mad?

Belarius. Look, here he comes,

184. *clotpoll*, thick head.

And brings the dire occasion in his arms
Of what we blame him for!

*Re-enter ARVIRAGUS with IMOGEN dead,
bearing her in his arms.*

Arviragus.

The bird is dead
That we have made so much on. I had rather
Have skipped from sixteen years of age to sixty,
To have turned my leaping-time into a crutch,
Than have seen this.

200

Guiderius.

O sweetest, fairest lily!
My brother wears thee not the one half so well
As when thou grewest thyself.

Belarius.

O melancholy!
Who ever yet could sound thy bottom, find
The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare
Might easiliest harbour in?—Thou blessed thing!
Jove knows what man thou mightst have made;
but I,
Thou diedst, a most rare boy, of melancholy!
—How found you him?

Arviragus.

Stark, as you see;
Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber,
Not as death's dart, being laughed at; his right
cheek
Reposing on a cushion.

210

Guiderius.

Where?

Arviragus.

On the floor;
His arms thus leagued. I thought he slept; and put
My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness
Answered my steps too loud.

205. *crare*, trading-boat.

214. *clouted*, patched.

209. *stark*, stiff.

214. *brogues*, shoes.

Guiderius. Why, he but sleeps.
If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed;
With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,
And worms will not come to thee.

Arviragus. With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack 220
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose,
nor

The azured harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweetened not thy breath. The ruddock would,
With charitable bill—O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument!—bring thee all this;
Yea, and furred moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse.

Guiderius. Prithce, have done!
And do not play in wench-like words with that 230
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,
And not protract with admiration what
Is now due debt.—To the grave!

Arviragus. Say, where shall us lay him?

Guiderius. By good Euriphile, our mother.

Arviragus. Be it so;
And let us, Polydore, though now our voices
Have got the mannish crack, sing him to the ground,
As once our mother; use like note and words,
Save that Euriphile must be Fidele.

Guiderius. Cadwal,
I cannot sing. I'll weep, and word it with thee; 240

223. *eglantine*, sweetbriar.

224. *ruddock*, robin.

For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse
Than priests and fanes that lie.

Arviragus.

We'll speak it, then.

Belarius. Great griefs, I see, medicine the less;
for Cloten

Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys;
And, though he came our enemy, remember
He was paid for that. Though mean and mighty
rotting

Together have one dust, yet reverence,
That angel of the world, doth make distinction
Of place 'tween high and low. Our foe was
princely;

And though you took his life as being our foe, 250
Yet bury him as a prince.

Guiderius.

Pray you, fetch him hither!

Thersites' body is as good as Ajax',
When neither are alive.

Arviragus.

If you'll go fetch him,

We'll say our song the whilst.—Brother, begin!

[*Exit Belarius.*]

Guiderius. Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to
the east;

My father hath a reason for it.

Arviragus.

'T is true.

Guiderius. Come on, then, and remove him.

Arviragus.

So.—Begin!

SONG.

Guiderius. Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages!

242. fanes, temples.

Thou thy worldly task hast done, 260
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Arviragus. Fear no more the frown of the great!
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat!
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Guiderius. Fear no more the lightning-flash! 270

Arviragus. Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone!

Guiderius. Fear not slander, censure rash!

Arviragus. Thou hast finished joy and moan.

Both. All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

Guiderius. No exorciser harm thee!

Arviragus. Nor no witchcraft charm thee!

Guiderius. Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

Arviragus. Nothing ill come near thee!

Both. Quiet consummation have; 280
And renown'd be thy grave!

Re-enter BELARIUS with the body of CLOTEN.

Guiderius. We have done our obsequies; come,
lay him down!

Belarius. Here's a few flowers; but 'bout mid-
night, more.

The herbs that have on them cold dew of the night
Are strewings fittest for graves. Upon their faces!
—You were as flowers, now withered; even so

275. *consign*, sign the same agreement.

280. *consummation*, ending.

These herblets shall, which we upon you strow.

—Come on, away; apart upon your knees!

The ground that gave them first has them again.

Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain. 290

[*Exeunt Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus.*]

Imogen. [*Awaking.*] Yes, sir, to Milford-Haven,
which is the way?

—I thank you.—By yond bush?—Pray, how far
thither?

—'Ods pittikins! can it be six mile yet?

I have gone all night. 'Faith! I'll lie down and
sleep.

But, soft; no bedfellow!—O gods and goddesses!

[*Seeing the body of Cloten.*]

These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;

This bloody man, the care on it.—I hope I dream;

For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,

And cook to honest creatures. But 't is not so;

'T was but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing, 300

Which the brain makes of fumes. Our very eyes

Are sometimes like our judgements, blind. Good
faith,

I tremble still with fear; but if there be

Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity

As a wren's eye, feared gods, a part of it!

The dream 's here still; even when I wake, it is

Without me, as within me, not imagined, felt.

A headless man!—The garments of Posthumus!

I know the shape of his leg; this is his hand,

His foot Mercurial, his Martial thigh, 310

The brawns of Hercules; but his Jovial face—

Murder in heaven? how?—'t is gone.—Pisanio,

All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,
Conspired with that irregularous devil, Cloten,
Hast here cut off my lord. To write and read
Be henceforth treacherous! Damned Pisanio
Hath with his forgèd letters—damned Pisanio—
From this most bravest vessel of the world
Strook the main-top!—O Posthumus, alas, 320
Where is thy head? where 's that? Ay me! where 's
that?

Pisanio might have killed thee at the heart,
And left this head on. How should this be,
Pisanio?

'T is he and Cloten; malice and lucre in them
Have laid this woe here. O, 't is pregnant, pregnant!

The drug he gave me, which he said was precious
And cordial to me, have I not found it
Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home.
This is Pisanio's deed and Cloten's. O!
Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood, 330
That we the horridier may seem to those
Which chance to find us. O, my lord, my lord!

Enter LUCIUS, Captains, and a Soothsayer.

Captain. To them the legions garrisoned in
Gallia,
After your will, have crossed the sea, attending
You here at Milford-Haven with your ships.
They are in readiness.

Lucius. But what from Rome?

Captain. The senate hath stirred up the confiners

315. *irregularous*, lawless. 325. *pregnant*, evident.

337. *confiners*, inhabitants.

And gentlemen of Italy, most willing spirits,
That promise noble service; and they come
Under the conduct of bold Iachimo,
Syenna's brother.

340

Lucius. When expect you them?

Captain. With the next benefit of the wind.

Lucius. This forwardness
Makes our hopes fair. Command our present
numbers

Be mustered; bid the captains look to it!—Now, sir,
What have you dreamed of late of this war's purpose?

Soothsayer. Last night the very gods showed me
a vision—

I fast and prayed for their intelligence—thus.*
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, winged
From the spongy south to this part of the west,
There vanished in the sunbeams; which portends— 350
Unless my sins abuse my divination—
Success to the Roman host.

Lucius. Dream often so,*
And never false!—Soft, ho! what trunk is here
Without his top? The ruin speaks that sometime
It was a worthy building.—How! a page!—
Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead, rather;
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.
Let's see the boy's face.

Captain. He's alive, my lord.

Lucius. He'll, then, instruct us of this body.—
Young one,

360

347. *fast*, in the preterite tense.

351. *abuse*, pervert.

Inform us of thy fortunes; for it seems
They crave to be demanded. Who is this
Thou makest thy bloody pillow? Or who was he
That, otherwise than noble nature did,
Hath altered that good picture? What's thy
interest

In this sad wrack? How came it? Who is it?
What art thou?

Imogen. I am nothing; or if not,
Nothing to be were better. This was my master,
A very valiant Briton and a good,
That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas! 370
There is no more such masters. I may wander
From east to occident, cry out for service,
Try many, all good, serve truly, never
Find such another master.

Lucius. 'Lack, good youth!
Thou movest no less with thy complaining than
Thy master in bleeding. Say his name, good
friend.

Imogen. Richard du Champ.—[*Aside.*] If I do lie,
and do
No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope
They'll pardon it.—Say you, sir?

Lucius. Thy name?

Imogen. Fidele, sir.

Lucius. Thou dost approve thyself the very same. 380
Thy name well fits thy faith, thy faith thy name.
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say
Thou shalt be so well mastered; but, be sure,
No less beloved. The Roman emperor's letters,

Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner
Than thine own worth prefer thee. Go with me!

Imogen. I'll follow, sir. But first, and 't please
the gods,

I'll hide my master from the flies, as deep
As these poor pickaxes can dig; and when
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I have strewed
his grave,

390

And on it said a century of prayers,
Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh,
And leaving so his service, follow you,
So please you entertain me.

Lucius. Ay, good youth;

And rather father thee than master thee.

—My friends,

The boy hath taught us manly duties; let us
Find out the prettiest daisied plot we can,
And make him with our pikes and partisans
A grave. Come, arm him!—Boy, he is preferred 400
By thee to us, and he shall be interred
As soldiers can. Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes!
Some falls are means the happier to arise. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Cymbeline's palace.*

Enter CYMBELINE, Lords, PISANIO and Attendants.

Cymbeline. Again; and bring me word how 't is
with her.

A fever with the absence of her son!

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

A madness, of which her life's in danger!—Heavens,
How deeply you at once do touch me! *Imogen,*

The great part of my comfort, gone; my queen
Upon a desperate bed, and in a time
When fearful wars point at me; her son gone,
So needful for this present! It strikes me past
The hope of comfort.—But for thee, fellow,
Who needs must know of her departure, and 10
Dost seem so ignorant, we'll enforce it from thee
By a sharp torture.

Pisanio. Sir, my life is yours;
I humbly set it at your will. But, for my mistress,
I nothing know where she remains, why gone,
Nor when she purposes return. Beseech your high-
ness,
Hold me your loyal servant!

First Lord. Good my liege,
The day that she was missing he was here.
I dare be bound he's true, and shall perform
All parts of his subjection loyally. For Cloten,
There wants no diligence in seeking him, 20
And will, no doubt, be found.

Cymbeline. The time is troublesome.
We'll slip you for a season, but our jealousy
Does yet depend.

First Lord. So please your majesty,
The Roman legions, all from Gallia drawn,
Are landed on your coast, with a supply
Of Roman gentlemen by the senate sent.

Cymbeline. Now for the counsel of my son and
queen!
I am amazed with matter.

First Lord. Good my liege,

19. *subjection*, service.23. *depend*, hang over you.

Your preparation can affront no less
 Than what you hear of; come more, for more
 you're ready. 30

The want is, but to put those powers in motion
 That long to move.

Cymbeline. I thank you. Let's withdraw;
 And meet the time as it seeks us. We fear not
 What can from Italy annoy us; but
 We grieve at chances here.—Away!

[*Exeunt. Manet Pisanio.*]

Pisanio. I heard no letter from my master since
 I wrote him Imogen was slain; 't is strange.
 Nor hear I from my mistress, who did promise
 To yield me often tidings; neither know I
 What is betid to Cloten; but remain 40
 Perplexed in all. The heavens still must work.
 Wherein I am false I am honest; not true, to be
 true.

These present wars shall find I love my country,
 Even to the note of the king, or I'll fall in them.
 All other doubts, by time let them be cleared.
 Fortune brings in some boats that are not steered.
 [Exit.]

SCENE IV. *Wales. Before the cave of Belarius.*

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.

Guiderius. The noise is round about us.

Belarius.

Let us from it.

Arviragus. What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to
 lock it

From action and adventure?

Guiderius. Nay, what hope
Have we in hiding us? This way, the Romans
Must or for Britons slay us, or receive us
For barbarous and unnatural revolts
During their use, and slay us after.

Belarius. Sons,
We'll higher to the mountains; there secure us.
To the king's party there's no going. Newness
Of Cloten's death — we being not known, not
mustered 10
Among the bands—may drive us to a render
Where we have lived; and so extort from us that
Which we have done, whose answer would be death
Drawn on with torture.

Guiderius. This is, sir, a doubt
In such a time nothing becoming you,
Nor satisfying us.

Arviragus. It is not likely
That when they hear the Roman horses neigh,
Behold their quartered fires, have both their eyes
And ears so cloyed importantly as now,
That they will waste their time upon our note, 20
To know from whence we are.

Belarius. O, I am known
Of many in the army. Many years,
Though Cloten then but young, you see, not wore
him

From my remembrance. And, besides, the king
Hath not deserved my service nor your loves,
Who find in my exile the want of breeding,
The certainty of this hard life, aye hopeless

6. revolts, rebels.

11. render, explanation.

18. quartered, encamped.

To have the courtesy your cradle promised,
But to be still hot summer's tanlings, and
The shrinking slaves of winter.

Guiderius. Than be so, 30
Better to cease to be. Pray, sir, to the army!
I and my brother are not known; yourself
So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,
Cannot be questioned.

Arviragus. By this sun that shines,
I'll thither! What thing is it that I never
Did see man die, scarce ever looked on blood,
But that of coward hares, hot goats, and venison;
Never bestrid a horse, save one that had
A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel
Nor iron on his heel? I am ashamed 40
To look upon the holy sun, to have
The benefit of his blessed beams, remaining
So long a poor unknown.

Guiderius. By heavens, I'll go.
If you will bless me, sir, and give me leave,
I'll take the better care; but if you will not,
The hazard therefore due fall on me by
The hands of Romans!

Arviragus. So say I; Amen.

Belarius. No reason I, since of your lives you set
So slight a valuation, should reserve
My cracked one to more care. Have with you, boys! 50
If in your country wars you chance to die,
That is my bed too, lads, and there I'll lie.
Lead, lead!—[*Aside.*] The time seems long; their
blood thinks scorn,
Till it fly out, and show them princes born.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I. *Britain. A field of battle.**Enter POSTHUMUS alone.*

Posthumus. Yea, bloody cloth, I'll keep thee; for
I am whisht
Thou shouldst be coloured thus. You married
ones,
If each of you should take this course, how many
Must murder wives much better than themselves
For wrying but a little!—O Pisanio!
Every good servant does not all commands.
No bond but to do just ones.—Gods! if you
Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never
Had lived to put on this; so had you saved
The noble Imogen to repent, and strook 10
Me, wretch more worth your vengeance. But,
alack,
You snatch some hence for little faults; that's love,
To have them fall no more. You some permit
To second ills with ills, each elder worse,
And make them dread it, to the doers' thrift.
But Imogen is your own; do your best wills,
And make me blest to obey!—I am brought hither
Among the Italian gentry, and to fight
Against my lady's kingdom. 'Tis enough
That, Britain, I have killed thy mistress; peace! 20
I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good
heavens,
Hear patiently my purpose! I'll disrobe me
Of these Italian weeds, and suit myself

1. *whisht*, distressed.5. *wrying*, going crooked.

As does a Briton peasant; so I'll fight
 Against the part I come with; so I'll die
 For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life
 Is, every breath, a death; and thus, unknown,
 Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril
 Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know
 More valour in me than my habits show. 30
 Gods, put the strength of the Leonati in me!
 To shame the guise of the world, I will begin
 The fashion, less without and more within. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *The same.*

Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO and the Roman Army at one door; and the Briton Army at another, LEONATUS POSTHUMUS following, like a poor soldier. They march over and go out. Then enter again in skirmish IACHIMO and POSTHUMUS; he vanquisheth and disarmeth IACHIMO, and then leaves him.

Iachimo. The heaviness and guilt within my bosom

Takes off my manhood. I have belied a lady,
 The princess of this country, and the air on it
 Revengingly enfeebles me; or could this carl,
 A very drudge of nature's, have subdued me
 In my profession? Knighthoods and honours,
 borne

As I wear mine, are titles but of scorn.
 If that thy gentry, Britain, go before
 This lout, as he exceeds our lords, the odds
 Is, that we scarce are men, and you are gods. [*Exit.* 10]

The battle continues; the Britons fly; CYMBELINE is taken. Then enter to his rescue BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS.

Belarius. Stand, stand! We have the advantage
of the ground;
The lane is guarded. Nothing routs us but
The villainy of our fears.

Guiderius. }
Arviragus. } Stand, stand, and fight!

Re-enter POSTHUMUS, and seconds the Britons; they rescue CYMBELINE, and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO and IMOGEN.

Lucius. Away, boy, from the troops, and save
thyself;
For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such
As war were hoodwinked.

Iachimo. 'T is their fresh supplies.

Lucius. It is a day turned strangely. Or betimes
Let's re-enforce, or fly. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III. *The same.*

Enter POSTHUMUS and a Briton Lord.

Lord. Camest thou from where they made the
stand?

Posthumus.

I did;

Though you, it seems, come from the fliers.

Lord.

I did.

Posthumus. No blame be to you, sir, for all was
lost,

But that the heavens fought; the king himself

Of his wings destitute, the army broken,
 And but the backs of Britons seen, all flying
 Through a strait lane. The enemy full-hearted,
 Lolling the tongue with slaughtering, having work
 More plentiful than tools to do it, struck down
 Some mortally, some slightly touched, some falling 10
 Merely through fear, that the strait pass was dammed
 With dead men hurt behind, and cowards living
 To die with lengthened shame.

Lord.

Where was this lane?

Posthumus. Close by the battle, ditched, and walled
 with turf;

Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier—
 An honest one, I warrant—who deserved
 So long a breeding as his white beard came to,
 In doing this for his country. Athwart the lane,
 He, with two striplings, lads more like to run
 The country base than to commit such slaughter, 20
 With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer
 Than those for preservation cased or shame,
 Made good the passage; cried to those that fled,
 ‘Our Britain’s harts die flying, not our men.
 To darkness fleet, souls that fly backwards. Stand!
 Or we are Romans, and will give you that
 Like beasts, which you shun beastly, and may
 save,

But to look back in frown. Stand, stand!’ These
 three,

Three thousand confident, in act as many—
 For three performers are the file when all 30
 The rest do nothing—with this word, ‘Stand, stand!’
 Accommodated by the place, more charming

7. *strait*, narrow.

20. *base*, a game of mimic capture.

With their own nobleness—which could have turned
A distaff to a lance—gilded pale looks;
Part shame, part spirit renewed, that some, turned
coward

But by example—O, a sin in war,
Damned in the first beginners!—'gan to look
The way that they did, and to grin like lions
Upon the pikes of the hunters. Then began
A stop in the chaser, a retire; anon 40
A rout, confusion-thick. Forthwith they fly
Chickens, the way which they stooped eagles; slaves,
The strides they victors made; and now our
cowards—

Like fragments in hard voyages—became
The life of the need. Having found the back-door
open

Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound
Some slain before; some dying; some, their friends
O'er-borne in the former wave. Ten, chased by
one,

Are now each one the slaughter-man of twenty.
Those that would die or e'er resist are grown 50
The mortal bugs of the field.

Lord. This was strange chance—
A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys!

Posthumus. Nay, do not wonder at it; you are
made

Rather to wonder at the things you hear
Than to work any. Will you rhyme upon it,
And vent it for a mockery? Here is one.
'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane,
Preserved the Britons, was the Romans' bane.'

Lord. Nay, be not angry, sir.

Posthumus.

'Lack, to what end?

Who dares not stand his foe, I'll be his friend; 60
For if he'll do as he is made to do,
I know he'll quickly fly my friendship too.
You have put me into rhyme.

Lord.

Farewell! you are angry.

Posthumus. Still going? [*Exit Lord.*] This is a
lord! O noble misery,

To be in the field, and ask, what news, of me!
To-day how many would have given their honours
To have saved their carcasses; took heel to do
it,

And yet died too! I, in mine own woe charmed,
'Could not find death where I did hear him groan,
Nor feel him where he strook. Being an ugly
monster, 70

'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft
beds,

Sweet words; or hath more ministers than we
That draw his knives in the war. Well, I will find
him.

Fortune being now a favourer to the Briton,
No more a Briton, I have resumed again
The part I came in. Fight I will no more,
But yield me to the veriest hind that shall
Once touch my shoulder. Great the slaughter is
Here made by the Roman; great the answer be
Britons must take. For me, my ransom's death; 80
On either side I come to spend my breath,
Which neither here I'll keep nor bear again,
But end it by some means for Imogen.

Enter two British Captains and Soldiers.

First Captain. Great Jupiter be praised! Lucius is taken.

'Tis thought the old man and his sons were angels.

Second Captain. There was a fourth man, in a silly habit,
That gave the affront with them.

First Captain. So 't is reported;
But none of 'em can be found.—Stand! who is there?

Posthumus. A Roman,
Who had not now been drooping here, if seconds 90
Had answered him.

Second Captain. Lay hands on him! A dog,
A leg of Rome shall not return to tell
What crows have pecked them here. He brags his
service
As if he were of note; bring him to the king!

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO and Roman Captives. The Captains present POSTHUMUS to CYMBELINE, who delivers him over to a Gaoler. Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *A prison.*

Enter POSTHUMUS and two Gaolers.

First Gaoler. You shall not now be stolen; you
Have locks upon you.
So graze as you find pasture.

Second Gaoler. Ay, or a stomach.

[Exeunt Gaolers.]

Posthumus. Most welcome, bondage! for thou art
a way,

I think, to liberty; yet am I better
 Than one that's sick of the gout, since he had rather
 Groan so in perpetuity than be cured
 By the sure physician, death, who is the key
 To unbar these locks. My conscience, thou art
 fettered

More than my shanks and wrists. You good gods,
 give me

The penitent instrument to pick that bolt, 10

Then free for ever! Is it enough I am sorry?

So children temporal fathers do appease.

Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent?

I cannot do it better than in gyves,

Desired more than constrained. To satisfy,

If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take

No stricter render of me than my all.

I know you are more clement than vild men,

Who of their broken debtors take a third,

A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again 20

On their abatement; that's not my desire.

For Imogen's dear life take mine, and though

'T is not so dear, yet 't is a life; you coined it.

'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;

Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake.

You rather mine, being yours; and so, great powers,

If you will take this audit, take this life,

And cancel these cold bonds.—O Imogen!

I'll speak to thee in silence. [Sleeps.]

Solemn music. Enter, as in an apparition, Sicilius Leonatus, father to Posthumus, an old man, attired like a warrior, leading in his hand an ancient

14. gyves, fetters.

18. vild, vile.

27. audit, rendering of accounts.

matron, his wife and mother to Posthumus, with music before them. Then, after other music, follows the two young Leonati, brothers to Posthumus, with wounds as they died in the wars. They circle Posthumus round, as he lies sleeping.

Sicilius. No more, thou thunder-master, show
Thy spite on mortal flies.
With Mars fall out, with Juno chide,
That thy adulteries
Rates and revenges.
Hath my poor boy done aught but well,
Whose face I never saw?
I died whilst in the womb he stayed
Attending nature's law;
Whose father then, as men report
Thou orphans' father art,
Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him
From this earth-vexing smart. 30

Mother. Lucina lent not me her aid,
But took me in my throes;
That from me was Posthumus ripped,
Came crying 'mongst his foes,
A thing of pity!

Sicilius. Great nature, like his ancestry,
Moulded the stuff so fair,
That he deserved the praise of the world,
As great Sicilius' heir. 50

First Brother. When once he was mature for man,
In Britain where was he
That could stand up his parallel;
Or fruitful object be
In eye of Imogen, that best
Could deem his dignity?

57. deem, judge.

Mother. With marriage wherefore was he mocked,
To be exiled, and thrown
From Leonati seat, and cast
From her his dearest one,
Sweet Imogen? 60

Sicilius. Why did you suffer Iachimo,
Slight thing of Italy,
To taint his nobler heart and brain
With needless jealousy;
And to become the geck and scorn
Of the other's villainy?

Second Brother. For this from stiller seats we came,
Our parents, and us twain,
That, striking in our country's cause,
Fell bravely, and were slain,
Our fealty and Tenantius' right
With honour to maintain. 70

First Brother. Like hardiment Posthumus hath
To Cymbeline performed.
Then, Jupiter, thou king of gods,
Why hast thou thus adjourned
The graces for his merits due,
Being all to dolours turned? 80

Sicilius. Thy crystal window ope; look out!
No longer exercise
Upon a valiant race thy harsh
And potent injuries.

Mother. Since, Jupiter, our son is good,
Take off his miseries.

Sicilius. Peep through thy marble mansion; help!
Or we poor ghosts will cry
To the shining synod of the rest
Against thy deity. 90

Both Brothers. Help, Jupiter! or we appeal,
And from thy justice fly.

JUPITER descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle; he throws a thunder-bolt. The Ghosts fall on their knees.

Jupiter. No more, you petty spirits of region low,

Offend our hearing; hush! How dare you ghosts

Accuse the thunderer, whose bolt, you know,

Sky-planted, batters all rebelling coasts?

Poor shadows of Elysium, hence, and rest

Upon your never-withering bank of flowers!

Be not with mortal accidents oppressed!

No care of yours it is; you know 't is ours.

100

Whom best I love I cross, to make my gift,

The more delayed, delighted. Be content!

Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift;

His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.

Our Jovial star reigned at his birth, and in

Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade!

He shall be lord of lady Imogen,

And happier much by his affliction made.

This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein

Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine!

110

And so, away! No further with your din

Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.

—Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline!

[*Ascends.*]

Sicilius. He came in thunder; his celestial breath
Was sulphurous to smell; the holy eagle
Stooped, as to foot us; his ascension is
More sweet than our blessed fields; his royal bird
Prunes the immortal wing, and cloys his beak,
As when his god is pleased.

All.

Thanks, Jupiter!

Sicilius. The marble pavement closes; he is entered 120
His radiant roof.—Away! and, to be blessed,
Let us with care perform his great behest.

[The Ghosts vanish.]

Posthumus. *[Waking.]* Sleep, thou hast been a
grandsire, and begot
A father to me; and thou hast created
A mother and two brothers. But—O scorn!—
Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born;
And so I am awake.—Poor wretches that depend
On greatness' favour dream as I have done;
Wake, and find nothing.—But, alas, I swerve.
Many dream not to find, neither deserve, 130
And yet are steeped in favours; so am I,
That have this golden chance, and know not why.
What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O
rare one!

Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment
Nobler than that it covers. Let thy effects
So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,
As good as promise.

[Reads.]

'Whenas a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown,
without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of
tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped 140
branches, which, being dead many years, shall after
revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow;
then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate,
and flourish in peace and plenty.'

'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue, and brain not; either both, or nothing,
Of senseless speaking, or a speaking such

As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
The action of my life is like it, which
I'll keep, if but for sympathy.

150

Re-enter First Gaoler.

First Gaoler. Come, sir, are you ready for death?

Posthumus. Over-roasted rather; ready long ago.

First Gaoler. Hanging is the word, sir; if you be ready for that, you are well cooked.

Posthumus. So, if I prove a good repast to the spectators, the dish pays the shot.

First Gaoler. A heavy reckoning for you, sir. But the comfort is, you shall be called to no more payments, fear no more tavern-bills; which are often the sadness of parting, as the procuring of 160 mirth. You come in faint for want of meat, depart reeling with too much drink; sorry that you have paid too much, and sorry that you are paid too much; purse and brain both empty, the brain the heavier for being too light, the purse too light being drawn of heaviness. O, of this contradiction you shall now be quit. O the charity of a penny cord! it sums up thousands in a trice; you have no true debtor and creditor but it; of what's past, is, and to come, the discharge. Your neck, sir, is 170 pen, book, and counters; so the acquittance follows.

Posthumus. I am merrier to die than thou art to live.

First Gaoler. Indeed, sir, he that sleeps feels not the toothache. But a man that were to sleep your sleep, and a hangman to help him to bed, I think

he would change places with his officer; for, look you, sir, you know not which way you shall go.

Posthumus. Yes, indeed do I, fellow.

First Gaoler. Your death has eyes in 's head, then; 180
I have not seen him so pictured. You must either be directed by some that take upon them to know, or to take upon yourself that which I am sure you do not know, or jump the after-inquiry on your own peril; and how you shall speed in your journey's end, I think you'll never return to tell one.

Posthumus. I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to direct them the way I am going, but such as wink and will not use them.

First Gaoler. What an infinite mock is this, that 190
a man should have the best use of eyes to see the way of blindness! I am sure hanging's the way of winking.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Knock off his manacles; bring your prisoner to the king!

Posthumus. Thou bringest good news; I am called to be made free.

First Gaoler. I'll be hanged, then.

Posthumus. Thou shalt be then freer than a
gaoler; no bolts for the dead. 200

[*Exeunt Posthumus and Messenger.*]

First Gaoler. Unless a man would marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone. Yet, on my conscience, there are verier knaves desire to live, for all he be a Roman; and

there be some of them too that die against their wills. So should I, if I were one. I would we were all of one mind, and one mind good. O, there were desolation of gaolers and gallowses! I speak against my present profit; but my wish hath a preferment in't. [Exeunt. 210

SCENE V. *The same. Before Cymbeline's tent.*

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, and Lords.

Cymbeline. Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made Preservers of my throne. Woe is my heart That the poor soldier, that so richly fought, Whose rags shamed gilded arms, whose naked breast Stepped before targes of proof, cannot be found. He shall be happy that can find him, if Our grace can make him so.

Belarius. I never saw Such noble fury in so poor a thing; Such precious deeds in one that promised naught But beggary and poor looks.

Cymbeline. No tidings of him? 10

Pisanio. He hath been searched among the dead and living, But no trace of him.

Cymbeline. To my grief, I am The heir of his reward; which I will add To you, the liver, heart, and brain of Britain, [To Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus.

By whom I grant she lives. 'Tis now the time
To ask of whence you are. Report it!

Belarius.

Sir,

In Cambria are we born, and gentlemen.
Further to boast were neither true nor modest,
Unless I add we are honest.

Cymbeline.

Bow your knees!

Arise my knights of the battle! I create you
Companions to our person, and will fit you
With dignities becoming your estates. 20

Enter CORNELIUS and Ladies.

There's business in these faces.—Why so sadly
Greet you our victory? You look like Romans,
And not of the court of Britain.

Cornelius.

Hail, great king!

To sour your happiness, I must report
The queen is dead.

Cymbeline.

Who worse than a physician

Would this report become? But I consider
By medicine life may be prolonged, yet death
Will seize the doctor too.—How ended she? 30

Cornelius. With horror, madly dying, like her
life;

Which, being cruel to the world, concluded
Most cruel to herself. What she confessed
I will report, so please you. These her women
Can trip me, if I err, who with wet cheeks
Were present when she finished.

Cymbeline.

Prithee, say!

Cornelius. First, she confessed she never loved
you; only
Affected greatness got by you, not you;

Married your royalty, was wife to your place;
Abhorred your person.

Cymbeline. She alone knew this; 40
And, but she spoke it dying, I would not
Believe her lips in opening it. Proceed!

Cornelius. Your daughter, whom she bore in
hand to love
With such integrity, she did confess
Was as a scorpion to her sight, whose life,
But that her flight prevented it, she had
Ta'en off by poison.

Cymbeline. O most delicate fiend!
Who is it can read a woman?—Is there more?

Cornelius. More, sir, and worse. She did con-
fess she had
For you a mortal mineral, which, being took, 50
Should by the minute feed on life, and, lingering,
By inches waste you; in which time she purposed,
By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to
O'ercome you with her show, and in time,
When she had fitted you with her craft, to work
Her son into the adoption of the crown.
But, failing of her end by his strange absence,
Grew shameless-desperate; opened, in despite
Of heaven and men, her purposes; repented
The evils she hatched were not effected; so, 60
Despairing, died.

Cymbeline. Heard you all this, her women?

First Lady. We did, so please your highness.

Cymbeline. Mine eyes
Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;

Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart,
That thought her like her seeming. It had been
vicious

To have mistrusted her; yet, O my daughter!
That it was folly in me, thou mayst say,
And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

*Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the Soothsayer, and other
Roman Prisoners, guarded; POSTHUMUS behind,
and IMOGEN.*

Thou comest not, Caius, now for tribute; that
The Britons have razed out, though with the loss 70
Of many a bold one, whose kinsmen have made
suit

That their good souls may be appeased with
slaughter
Of you their captives, which ourself have granted.
So think of your estate.

Lucius. Consider, sir, the chance of war. The
day

Was yours by accident; had it gone with us,
We should not, when the blood was cool, have
threatened

Our prisoners with the sword. But since the
gods

Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives
May be called ransom, let it come. Sufficeth 80
A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer.
Augustus lives to think on it; and so much
For my peculiar care. This one thing only,
I will entreat. My boy, a Briton born,
Let him be ransomed. Never master had
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,
So tender over his occasions, true,

So feat, so nurse-like. Let his virtue join
With my request, which I'll make bold your high-
ness

Cannot deny. He hath done no Briton harm, 90
Though he have served a Roman. Save him, sir,
And spare no blood beside.

Cymbeline. I have surely seen him;
His favour is familiar to me.—Boy,
Thou hast looked thyself into my grace,
And art mine own.—I know not why, wherefore,
To say 'Live, boy!' Ne'er thank thy master; live!
And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,
Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it,
Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,
The noblest ta'en.

Imogen. I humbly thank your highness. 100

Lucius. I do not bid thee beg my life, good lad;
And yet I know thou wilt.

Imogen. No, no; alack!
There's other work in hand. I see a thing
Bitter to me as death. Your life, good master,
Must shuffle for itself.

Lucius. The boy disdains me;
He leaves me, scorns me. Briefly die their joys
That place them on the truth of girls and boys.
Why stands he so perplexed?

Cymbeline. What wouldst thou, boy?
I love thee more and more; think more and more
What's best to ask. Knowest him thou lookest
on? speak! 110
Wilt have him live? Is he thy kin, thy friend?

Imogen. He is a Roman; no more kin to me
Than I to your highness, who, being born your
vassal,
Am something nearer.

Cymbeline. Wherefore eyst him so?

Imogen. I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please
To give me hearing.

Cymbeline. Ay, with all my heart,
And lend my best attention. What's thy name?

Imogen. Fidele, sir.

Cymbeline. Thou art my good youth, my page;
I'll be thy master. Walk with me; speak freely.

[*Cymbeline and Imogen converse apart.*]

Belarius. Is not this boy revived from death?

Arviragus. One and another 120

Not more resembles that sweet rosy lad
Who died, and was Fidele.—What think you?

Guiderius. The same dead thing alive.

Belarius. Peace, peace! see further; he eyes us
not; forbear!

Creatures may be alike; were it he, I am sure
He would have spoke to us.

Guiderius. But we saw him dead.

Belarius. Be silent! let's see further.

Pisanio. [*Aside.*] It is my mistress.
Since she is living, let the time run on
To good or bad.

[*Cymbeline and Imogen come forward.*]

Cymbeline. Come, stand thou by our side;
Make thy demand aloud!—[*To Iachimo*] Sir, step
you forth!

Give answer to this boy, and do it freely;

Or, by our greatness, and the grace of it,
Which is our honour, bitter torture shall
Winnow the truth from falsehood.—On, speak to
him!

Imogen. My boon is, that this gentleman may
render
Of whom he had this ring.

Posthumus. [*Aside.*] What's that to him?

Cymbeline. That diamond upon your finger, say
How came it yours?

Iachimo. Thou'lt torture me to leave unspoken
that
Which, to be spoke, would torture thee.

Cymbeline. How! me? 140

Iachimo. I am glad to be constrained to utter that
Which torments me to conceal. By villainy
I got this ring. 'T was Leonatus' jewel,
Whom thou didst banish; and—which more may
grieve thee,
As it doth me—a nobler sir ne'er lived
'Twixt sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my
lord?

Cymbeline. All that belongs to this.

Iachimo. That paragon, thy daughter,
For whom my heart drops blood, and my false
spirits
Quail to remember—Give me leave! I faint.

Cymbeline. My daughter! what of her? Renew
thy strength! 150
I had rather thou shouldst live while nature will
Than die ere I hear more. Strive, man, and speak!

Iachimo. Upon a time—unhappy was the clock

That strook the hour!—it was in Rome—accursed
 The mansion where!—'t was at a feast—O, would
 Our viands had been poisoned, or at least
 Those which I heaved to head!—the good Post-
 humus—

What should I say? he was too good to be
 Where ill men were, and was the best of all
 Amongst the rarest of good ones—sitting sadly, 160
 Hearing us praise our loves of Italy
 For beauty that made barren the swelled boast
 Of him that best could speak; for feature, laming
 The shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva,
 Postures beyond brief nature; for condition,
 A shop of all the qualities that man
 Loves woman for, besides that hook of wiving,
 Fairness which strikes the eye—

Cymbeline. I stand on fire;
 Come to the matter!

Iachimo. All too soon I shall,
 Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Post-
 humus, 170
 Most like a noble lord in love, and one
 That had a royal lover, took his hint;
 And, not disparising whom we praised—therein
 He was as calm as virtue—he began
 His mistress' picture; which by his tongue being
 made,
 And then a mind put in it, either our brags
 Were cracked of kitchen-trulls, or his description
 Proved us unspeaking sots.

Cymbeline. Nay, nay, to the purpose!

164. *straight-pight*, erect.

177. *trulls*, wenches.

178. *sots*, fools.

Iachimo. Your daughter's chastity — there it begins.

He spake of her, as Dian had hot dreams, 180
And she alone were cold; whereat I, wretch,
Made scruple of his praise, and waged with him
Pieces of gold 'gainst this which then he wore
Upon his honoured finger, to attain
In suit the place of his bed, and win this ring
By hers and mine adultery. He, true knight,
No lesser of her honour confident
Than I did truly find her, stakes this ring,
And would so, had it been a carbuncle
Of Phoebus' wheel; and might so safely, had it 190
Been all the worth of his car. Away to Britain
Post I in this design. Well may you, sir,
Remember me at court; where I was taught
Of your chaste daughter the wide difference
'Twixt amorous and villainous. Being thus quenched
Of hope, not longing, mine Italian brain
'Gan in your duller Britain operate
Most vildly; for my vantage, excellent.
And, to be brief, my practice so prevailed
That I returned with simular proof enough 200
To make the noble Leonatus mad,
By wounding his belief in her renown
With tokens thus and thus, averring notes
Of chamber-hanging, pictures, this her bracelet—
O cunning, how I got it!—nay, some marks
Of secret on her person, that he could not
But think her bond of chastity quite cracked,
I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon,
Methinks, I see him now—

182. *scruple*, criticism.199. *practice*, trickery.200. *simular*, counterfeit.

Posthumus. [*Coming forward.*] Ay, so thou dost,
 Italian fiend!—Ay me, most credulous fool, 210
 Egregious murderer, thief, any thing
 That's due to all the villains past, in being,
 To come!—O, give me cord, or knife, or poison,
 Some upright justicer!—Thou, king, send out
 For torturers ingenious. It is I
 That all the abhorr'd things of the earth amend
 By being worse than they. I am Posthumus,
 That killed thy daughter—villain-like, I lie—
 That caused a lesser villain than myself,
 A sacrilegious thief, to do it. The temple 220
 Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself.
 Spit, and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set
 The dogs of the street to bay me; every villain
 Be called Posthumus Leonatus, and
 Be villainy less than 't was!—O Imogen!
 My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
 Imogen, Imogen!

Imogen. Peace, my lord! hear, hear—

Posthumus. Shall us have a play of this? Thou
 scornful page,
 There lie thy part. [*Striking her; she falls.*]

Pisanio. O, gentlemen, help!
 Mine and your mistress!—O, my lord Posthu- 230
 mus!
 You ne'er killed Imogen till now.—Help, help!—
 Mine honoured lady!

Cymbeline. Does the world go round?

Posthumus. How comes these staggers on me?

Pisanio. Wake, my mistress!

Cymbeline. If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me
To death with mortal joy.

Pisanio. How fares my mistress?

Imogen. O, get thee from my sight;
Thou gavest me poison; dangerous fellow, hence!
Breathe not where princes are.

Cymbeline. The tune of Imogen!

Pisanio. Lady,
The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if
That box I gave you was not thought by me 240
A precious thing; I had it from the queen.

Cymbeline. New matter still?

Imogen. It poisoned me.

Cornelius. O gods!—

I left out one thing which the queen confessed,
Which must approve thee honest. 'If Pisanio
Have', said she, 'given his mistress that confection
Which I gave him for cordial, she is served
As I would serve a rat.'

Cymbeline. What's this, Cornelius?

Cornelius. The queen, sir, very oft importuned me
To temper poisons for her, still pretending 250
The satisfaction of her knowledge only
In killing creatures wild, as cats and dogs,
Of no esteem. I, dreading that her purpose
Was of more danger, did compound for her
A certain stuff, which, being ta'en, would cease
The present power of life; but in short time
All offices of nature should again
Do their due functions.—Have you ta'en of it?

Imogen. Most like I did, for I was dead.

Belarius.

My boys,

There was our error.

Guiderius.

This is, sure, Fidele.

260

Imogen. Why did you throw your wedded lady
from you?

Think that you are upon a rock; and now

Throw me again.

[*Embracing him.*]

Posthumus.

Hang there like fruit, my soul,

Till the tree die!

Cymbeline.

How now, my flesh, my child!

What, makest thou me a dullard in this act?

Wilt thou not speak to me?

Imogen.

Your blessing, sir! [*Kneeling.*]

Belarius. [*To Guiderius and Arviragus.*] Though
you did love this youth, I blame you not;

You had a motive for it.

Cymbeline.

My tears that fall

Prove holy water on thee! Imogen,

Thy mother's dead.

Imogen.

I am sorry for it, my lord.

270

Cymbeline. O, she was naught, and long of her it
was

That we meet here so strangely; but her son
Is gone, we know not how nor where.

Pisanio.

My lord,

Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth. Lord Cloten,
Upon my lady's missing, came to me
With his sword drawn; foamed at the mouth, and
swore,

If I discovered not which way she was gone,

It was my instant death. By accident,

I had a feign'd letter of my master's
Then in my pocket, which directed him 280
To seek her on the mountains near to Milford;
Where, in a frenzy, in my master's garments,
Which he enforced from me, away he posts
With unchaste purpose, and with oath to violate
My lady's honour. What became of him
I further know not.

Guiderius. Let me end the story!
I slew him there.

Cymbeline. Marry, the gods forfend!
I would not thy good deeds should from my lips
Pluck a hard sentence. Prithee, valiant youth,
Deny it again!

Guiderius. I have spoke it, and I did it. 290

Cymbeline. He was a prince.

Guiderius. A most incivil one. The wrongs he
did me
Were nothing prince-like; for he did provoke me
With language that would make me spurn the sea,
If it could so roar to me. I cut off his head;
And am right glad he is not standing here
To tell this tale of mine.

Cymbeline. I am sorry for thee.
By thine own tongue thou art condemned, and
must
Endure our law. Thou art dead.

Imogen. That headless man
I thought had been my lord.

Cymbeline. Bind the offender, 300
And take him from our presence.

Belarius. Stay, sir king!

This man is better than the man he slew,
As well descended as thyself; and hath
More of thee merited than a band of Clotens
Had ever scar for.—[*To the Guard.*] Let his arms
alone!

They were not born for bondage.

Cymbeline. Why, old soldier,
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,
By tasting of our wrath? How of descent
As good as we?

Arviragus. In that he spake too far.

Cymbeline. And thou shalt die for it.

Belarius. We will die all three, 310
But I will prove that two on us are as good
As I have given out him.—My sons, I must,
For mine own part, unfold a dangerous speech,
Though, haply, well for you.

Arviragus. Your danger's ours.

Guiderius. And our good his.

Belarius. Have at it then, by leave.
Thou hadst, great king, a subject who
Was called Belarius.

Cymbeline. What of him? he is
A banished traitor.

Belarius. He it is that hath
Assumed this age; indeed, a banished man.
I know not how a traitor.

Cymbeline. Take him hence! 320
The whole world shall not save him.

Belarius. Not too hot!
First pay me for the nursing of thy sons;

And let it be confiscate all, so soon
As I have received it.

Cymbeline. Nursing of my sons!

Belarius. I am too blunt and saucy; here's my
knee.

Ere I arise, I will prefer my sons;
Then spare not the old father. Mighty sir,
These two young gentlemen, that call me father,
And think they are my sons, are none of mine.
They are the issue of your loins, my liege, 330
And blood of your begetting.

Cymbeline. How? my issue?

Belarius. So sure as you your father's. I, old
Morgan,
Am that Belarius whom you sometime banished.
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punish-
ment

Itself, and all my treason that I suffered,
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes—
For such and so they are—these twenty years
Have I trained up; those arts they have as I
Could put into them. My breeding was, sir, as
Your highness knows. Their nurse, Euriphile, 340
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children
Upon my banishment. I moved her to it,
Having received the punishment before,
For that which I did then. Beaten for loyalty
Excited me to treason. Their dear loss,
The more of you 't was felt, the more it shaped
Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,
Here are your sons again; and I must lose
Two of the sweetest companions in the world.
The benediction of these covering heavens 350

Fall on their heads like dew, for they are worthy
To inlay heaven with stars.

Cymbeline. Thou weepest, and speakest.
The service that you three have done is more
Unlike than this thou tellest. I lost my children.
If these be they, I know not how to wish
A pair of worthier sons.

Belarius. Be pleased awhile!
This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,
Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius.
This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,
Your younger princely son. He, sir, was lapped 360
In a most curious mantle, wrought by the hand
Of his queen-mother, which, for more probation,
I can with ease produce.

Cymbeline. Guiderius had
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star;
It was a mark of wonder.

Belarius. This is he;
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp.
It was wise nature's end in the donation,
To be his evidence now.

Cymbeline. O, what, am I
A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother
Rejoiced deliverance more.—Blessed pray you be, 370
That, after this strange starting from your orbs,
You may reign in them now!—O Imogen,
Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

Imogen. No, my lord!
I have got two worlds by it.—O my gentle brothers,
Have we thus met? O, never say hereafter

But I am truest speaker. You called me brother,
When I was but your sister; I you brothers,
When ye were so indeed.

Cymbeline. Did you e'er meet?

Arviragus. Ay, my good lord.

Guiderius. And at first meeting loved;
Continued so, until we thought he died. 380

Cornelius. By the queen's dram she swallowed.

Cymbeline. O rare instinct!
When shall I hear all through? This fierce abridgement

Hath to it circumstantial branches, which
Distinction should be rich in.—Where? how lived
you?

And when came you to serve our Roman captive?
How parted with your brothers? How first met
them?

Why fled you from the court, and whither? These,
And your three motives to the battle, with
I know not how much more, should be demanded;
And all the other by-dependencies, 390
From chance to chance. But nor the time nor
place

Will serve our long interrogatories. See,
Posthumus anchors upon Imogen;
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her
eye

On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting
Each object with a joy; the counterchange
Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,
And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.

—[*To Belarius.*] Thou art my brother; so we'll
hold thee ever.

Imogen. You are my father too; and did relieve
me,
To see this gracious season. 400

Cymbeline. All o'erjoyed,
Save these in bonds! Let them be joyful too,
For they shall taste our comfort.

Imogen. My good master,
I will yet do you service.

Lucius. Happy be you!

Cymbeline. The forlorn soldier, that so nobly
fought,
He would have well becomed this place, and
graced
The thankings of a king.

Posthumus. I am, sir,
The soldier that did company these three
In poor beseeming; 't was a fitment for
The purpose I then followed.—That I was he, 410
Speak, Iachimo! I had you down, and might
Have made you finish.

Iachimo. I am down again. [*Kneeling.*
But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,
As then your force did. Take that life, beseech
you,
Which I so often owe; but your ring first,
And here the bracelet of the truest princess
That ever swore her faith.

Posthumus. Kneel not to me!
The power that I have on you is to spare you;
The malice towards you to forgive you. Live,
And deal with others better.

Cymbeline. Nobly doomed! 420

We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law.
Pardon's the word to all.

Arviragus. You help us, sir,
As you did mean indeed to be our brother;
Joyed are we that you are.

Posthumus. Your servant, princes.—Good my lord
of Rome,
Call forth your soothsayer. As I slept, methought
Great Jupiter, upon his eagle backed,
Appeared to me, with other spritely shows
Of mine own kindred. When I waked, I found
This label on my bosom; whose containing 430
Is so from sense in hardness, that I can
Make no collection of it. Let him show
His skill in the construction.

Lucius. Philarmonus!

Soothsayer. Here, my good lord!

Lucius. Read, and declare the meaning!

Soothsayer. [*Reads.*] 'Whenas a lion's whelp shall,
to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be em-
braced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately
cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many
years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and
freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, 440
Britain be fortunate, and flourish in peace and plenty.'

Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;
The fit and apt construction of thy name,
Being Leo-natus, doth import so much.
[*To Cymbeline.*] The piece of tender air, thy virtu-
ous daughter,
Which we call *mollis aer*; and *mollis aer*

421. *freeness*, generosity.

428. *spritely*, ghost-like.

We term it *mulier*, which *mulier* I divine
Is his most constant wife, [To *Posthumus*] who,
even now,
Answering the letter of the oracle,
Unknown to you, unsought, were clipped about 450
With this most tender air.

Cymbeline. This hath some seeming.

Soothsayer. The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,
Personates thee; and thy lopped branches point
Thy two sons forth, who, by Belarius stolen,
For many years thought dead, are now revived,
To the majestic cedar joined, whose issue
Promises Britain peace and plenty.

Cymbeline. Well,
My peace we will begin. And, Caius Lucius,
Although the victor, we submit to Cæsar,
And to the Roman empire, promising
To pay our wonted tribute, from the which
We were dissuaded by our wicked queen;
Whom heavens, in justice, both on her and hers,
Have laid most heavy hand.

Soothsayer. The fingers of the powers above do
tune
The harmony of this peace. The vision
Which I made known to Lucius, ere the stroke
Of this yet scarce-cold battle, at this instant
Is full accomplished; for the Roman eagle,
From south to west on wing soaring aloft,
Lessened herself, and in the beams of the sun
So vanished, which foreshowed our princely eagle,
The imperial Caesar, should again unite
His favour with the radiant Cymbeline,
Which shines here in the west.

Cymbeline.

Laud we the gods;

And let our crookèd smokes climb to their nostrils

From our blessed altars. Publish we this peace

To all our subjects. Set we forward! Let

A Roman and a British ensign wave

Friendly together; so through Lud's-town march, 480

And in the temple of great Jupiter

Our peace we'll ratify, seal it with feasts.

Set on there!—Never was a war did cease,

Ere bloody hands were washed, with such a peace.

[*Exeunt.*]